

# The SMART SET

Edited by  
George Jean Nathan  
and  
H.L. Mencken



MAY, 1922

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## Bondage

*By A. Newberry Choyce*

GOWN you in silk and satin  
And marry one rich and grim,  
But the lad you met by a tall hedge . . .  
What of him!

When the blackthorns shall spill over  
And throstles are in the trees,  
And never a moon at night-time  
Can give you ease.

For treasure shall come in plenty  
To the dwelling you live at,  
But the kiss you gave by a tall hedge . . .  
What of that!

# The SMART SET

The  
Aristocrat  
Among  
Magazines



## The Missing Link

By Victor Thaddeus

TWO wise men and a fool, lost in the jungle, espied a rhinoceros charging toward them. The teeth of the fool began to shake, and he lifted his voice in lamentation; but the wise men were unafraid, for each of them carried a book.

The first wise man went down on his knees like a camel, for he had faith in the ventriloquism of his fathers. His book was dedicated to the most high and mighty prince, James, by the grace of God King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, etc., to which puissant monarch the translators wished Grace, Mercy and Peace. So, finding the appropriate passage that would take care of the rhinoceros, he read, stroking his beard:

"And Mizraim begat Ludim, and Canaan begat Sidon his first-born and Heth, and the Jebusite, and the Amorite, and the Girgasite, and the Hivite,

and the Arkite, and the Sinite, and the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite. Unto Shem also, the father of all the children of Eber, the brother of Japheth the elder, even to him were children born: Elam, and Asshur, and Arphaxad, and Lud, and Aram; and the children of Aram were Uz, Hul, Gether and Mash; and Arphaxad begat Salah, and Salah begat Eber, and Eber had two sons—the name of one was Peleg, and his brother's name was Joktan—and Joktan begat Almodad, and Sheleph, and Hazarmaveth, and Jerah, and Hadoram, and Uzal, and Diklah, and Obal, and Abimael, and Sheba, and Ophir, and Havilah, and Jobab."

The second wise man watched him with ill-concealed contempt.

"By the eagle eye of philosophy the bearded ass brays well!" quoth Number Two, whose brow was broad and man-

ner imperious. "Now do I exult in the wisdom of the immortal Kant. Ha! what sayest thou, master?"—opening his volume. "Now this is an interesting case of the 'thing in itself' in which I am the subject, and yonder approaching rhino is the object. His evil snorts and menacing appearance are merely secondary qualities that exist in my state of consciousness and not in him. Ha! what sayest *thou*, great Schopenhauer? Page 198. That he is merely part of the world as my will and idea. Now will I detach the will and allow the intellect to be free—I will contemplate rhino with pleasure but without *interest*, as a work of art." And he closed his compendium of philosophy.

The first wise man, observing that the rhinoceros had traversed the greater part of the intervening distance, and was approaching with accelerated speed, realized he was not employing the suitable quotation, skipped three hundred-odd pages and got down to brass tacks.

"The children of Shephatiah, three hundred seventy and two. The chil-

dren of Arah, seven hundred seventy and five. The children of Pahathmoab two thousand eight hundred and twelve. The children of Elam a thousand two hundred and fifty-four. The children of Zattu nine hundred forty and five. The children of Azgad, a thousand two hundred twenty and two. The—!"

"Behold the Superman!" interrupted the second wise man, glancing with patronizing eye from Number One to the rhinoceros, and touching his own broad forehead, "Thus spake Zarathustra!"

The first wise man saw that all indications pointed to the rhinoceros being on time as per schedule. Was the animal deaf? Again he skipped three hundred pages.

"Behold the fowls of the air!" he exhorted the rhinoceros—"for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns—!"

The rhinoceros had two horns. The fool saw that he was *de trop*. Having no books, but only a pair of long, stout legs, he ran away and founded Utopia.



THE trouble is that a man starts out in life believing that he is going to deal with ideals and later finds out that he has to deal mostly with idiots.



MAN is a queer being. He gets perfume out of coal tar and romance out of marriage.



WOMEN become famous by endorsing the cheques of famous men.



# The Nonpareil

[A Complete Novelette]

By James Hopper

## I

THE Nonpareil slid resiliently to the curb and came to a smooth halt before the automobile agency's plate-glassed store. Harley, the head salesman, leaped from the front seat right away, but Will, at the wheel, remained motionless a long moment, his head a little to one side, as if listening to the reverberations within him of some profound ecstasy.

Finally he shook his head and smiled at the salesman, who now stood on the sidewalk at his elbow. "She is certainly a beauty; certainly a beauty!" he said, in a sort of sigh. "Gee, she flies like a swallow, and she purrs so smooth!"

He drew out this last word and almost hummed it, so that it was like the soft whirr of a loom.

He was what most would have called a good-looking boy, with a fresh face and blond hair engagingly parted at the side and swept across a clear forehead. But some subtle defect in his vision, invisible in the eye itself, caused him, when facing anyone, to hold his chin down and a little to the left.

Harley laughed and nudged with his elbow Middleton, the agency's assistant manager, who had come out of the store and now stood by the salesman, enjoying with him the boy's utter enchantment.

Will put on the hand brake, turned off the ignition, and then continued sitting there, toying with small adjustments. He snapped on the lights, then he snapped on the dimmers alone, then

the tail light, then the dash-board's little light; he brought to a glow the cigar lighter and tested its heat with a wet finger. Finally, as if stepping out of a dream, he eased himself to the curb, closing the door gently behind him.

"She is certainly a beauty, fellows," he repeated, still with that strange air of being in a trance.

"Well, she's going to be yours, isn't she?" said Hartley, recovering his professional faculties. "You haven't changed your mind about it, have you? You're going to take her, aren't you?"

A slight trouble passed like a film over the boy's eyes. But immediately he was speaking stoutly.

"Sure, Hartley, I'm going to get her. She's the only machine for me. Soon as I get a few things fixed up."

He walked down alongside the car, passing his hand over the cold metal with the gesture of one caressing something living and warm. Behind the rear wheel he stopped to tighten a grease cup. And having rounded the machine, in an envelopment which was like an embrace, he stopped at the hood to rub off carefully a fleck of sand which had settled there.

"Some machine, eh?" broke in Middleton, a big fat man who, hands in his pockets, was taking amusement in the boy's naïve and unrestrained admiration.

"She's a peach," said Will, softly. "Just a peach. And how much did you say she was?" he added, in the tone of one who knows the answer but would fain hear it again, simply as something

which holds him close to the object of his preoccupation.

"Twenty-six hundred and forty-nine," said Hartley.

"Twenty-six hundred and forty-nine," Will echoed. He stood as if dreaming. "And you'll allow me on dad's old Rover?"

"Sure. We'll allow you five hundred on the old bus!"

"How much will that leave?" said Will.

"Why, that will leave twenty-one hundred and forty-nine."

"And you said I could have terms?"

"Sure. Five hundred cash down and the rest in twelve payments—with nominal interest. Five hundred down, Will, and she is yours!"

"And the car is mine!" the boy echoed unconsciously, and his face flushed with pleasure.

"What do you say?" Middleton broke in briskly. "Shall we make out the papers? Bring in the Rover and five hundred—and sign a little paper—and you can drive the car into your own garage—all yours!"

"I got to see about a few things," said Will, slowly. "About the Rover—I got to ask mother if she is willing. I know she is willing, but I got to ask her."

"Well," said Hartley, "come around whenever you want to, and I'll let you drive her again. She's just the car for you; there's nothing to beat her this year. Don't wait too long, though. You may find her gone and the next delivery may be slow. Come around whenever you want to, anyway."

He looked at his watch. "Time for lunch," he said briskly.

Thus dismissed, Will tore himself from the Nonpareil and with slow steps went home.

At lunch, which, as usual, he took alone with his mother, she suddenly found himself asking about the Liberty Bonds.

"Have we still got those Liberty Bonds, mom?" he asked.

"Why, yes, Willie, we still have them," she answered, her heart beating

a little at this unexpected show of mental alertness. "Why, yes, Willie, we still have them. Why do you ask, Willie?"

"We bought lots of Liberty Bonds during the war, didn't we?" he asked. "Lots and lots of Liberty Bonds!"

She smiled, then sighed a little at the thought of her little hope so quickly quenched. "Why, no, Willie—not so many, boy. We bought a little, Will. What we could afford from time to time. I don't think altogether there's more than six hundred dollars' worth."

"Where are they?" asked Will.

"Where do we keep them, mom?"

"Why, Will, what a business man you are getting to be; I keep them in the bank, dear."

"In Mr. Crompton's bank?"

"Yes; in the First National. He has been my good advisor since your father died."

## II

AFTER lunch, Will loitered aimlessly for a while, then went down into the basement. Some years before a part of the basement had been made into a garage and there the old Rover stood, careened on its sagging springs. Will contemplated it a while, then went the length of the garage to a rough door in its depth. He pushed the door open before him and passed through.

Here he was in the cellar itself, in a gray light. The ceiling was low and the earthen floor, of yellow clay, was uneven, with the same contour the soil had had long ago, before the town had been set here, and when over it probably the Indians roamed. But against the wall an old discarded bureau was propped. Will went to the bureau, pulled out a drawer and sat on the ground. Holding the drawer across his legs, he inspected the secret treasures hidden there.

There was a baseball and a bat, a sack of marbles, and other miscellanies, such as twine, an old razor, a watch that did not run any more, a cowboy hat and the receiver end of a telegraphic



instrument. He took up these objects one by one, as a miser handles his gold, and one by one laid them down, till thus he had come to the best of all, to the one which came the nearest to giving him that delicious feeling of possession which filled him when he drove the Nonpareil.

It was a German automatic which he had bartered away from a doughboy returned from the war. He took the weapon out of its wooden case and passed his hand with firm tenderness over the stock, polishing it. Then he extracted the clip of cartridges, and, aiming with eyes amorously half closed, shot with the empty weapon at spot after spot upon the wall. He got up, went to the garage, and, returning, oiled the mechanism with little drops precisely squirted. He replaced the cartridge clip, put on the safety catch and upon second thought snapped it off again, slid the gun back into the holster and replaced it in the tissue paper nest made for it in the corner of the drawer.

In the drawer was a riata of horse-hair which he had found years ago in a vacant lot after the circus had gone. He drew this out now, sat down, and, dangling it between his knees his hands began to toy with it idly. With sudden movements between immobilities, they tangled the rope till finally it formed a strange knot; one which, with two loops, looked like the hollow ears little children draw on each side of a round head. Between the ears, from the knot between, the end of the rope dangled to the ground. He now placed his foot on this rope-end, and holding the knot, raised his hands up into the air. To the gesture the two hollow ears vanished, resolved into themselves. He contemplated the phenomenon with a half smile, then, after a while, using his nails, pulled the two loops out again and carefully placed the riata, thus knotted, back into the drawer, which he closed.

Over in the corner by the coal bin, lay a long, rough hempen cord, worn and blackened. He strolled to it, picked it up, and slid the whole length slowly

between his fingers, coiling it, then lay the coil across the nearer wall of the bin.

One watching him through these acts would have thought that upon each he thought deeply, and that, together, they were the links of a carefully wrought plot. As a matter of fact, if abruptly asked, he would not have been able to tell why he was doing these things. Each act was detached and came from some dim impulse. But each, in some obscure way, was a step forward—a step toward something he wanted desperately.

It was one of these impulses which made him turn back as he was leaving the cellar. He returned to the old bureau, took out the baseball bat and placed it in the coal bin, sliding it upright in a corner, where it remained standing.

Small boys were playing ball in the street when he got out and he joined them, delighting them by batting high flies to them in turn. But his mind was not on the game; his mind, all the time was on that which had held it now for several days. He suddenly dropped the play, and leaving the youngsters looking after him disappointed, went slowly down the street.

The car had been taken inside. Washed and cleaned and polished, it stood daintily on the waxed parquet floor. For a time Will watched it through the plate-glass window. Somehow it reminded him of something he had heard of, had dreamed, or a picture he had seen. It reminded him of a little girl carried by little dwarves in a glass coffin. The sight of the car through the window reminded him of that little girl, so pretty on her white satin cushions within that glass coffin.

After a while he stepped within. Middleton was busy with some papers in his inner office; Hartley was attending a prospective customer who was inspecting a sedan. Will edged toward the Nonpareil—his Nonpareil—and lost himself in contemplation.

He stood off from it and took in the long, beloved lines. Nearing, he circled the machine several times, pausing at



every detail, rediscovering each with a small inward thrill. He passed his hand along the gleaming flanks. He opened the hood and looked in at the engine.

Middleton came out of the inner office.

"Back again?" he shouted, amused.

Will grasped the chance given him.

"Can I sit in her?" he asked.

"Go ahead. Wipe your feet, though."

Wipe his feet! As though he needed to be told! He got in and sat himself at the wheel; he took hold of it, his left toe went to the clutch, his right to the accelerator.

He sat there motionless, his head bent down a little to one side. He seemed to be listening. But he was merely feeling, feeling with invisible antennae projected from every one of his nerves, the deliciousness of sitting in the car, of holding in his hands the wheel, and under his foot the accelerator.

Hartley came to him. "Hard to keep away from her, eh?"

Will, brushing the blond hair out of his eyes, looked up at him with that slight crookedness which somehow gave him a pathos.

"Say," he whispered, as a child whispers to its mother when the stern father is near; "say, Hartley, let me take her out, will you?"

"You'll have her all wore out before you buy her," the salesman jested. "You are going to buy her, aren't you?"

"You bet," he answered heavily. He sat looking up at Hartley, his chin down and a little to the left. "There's a few things to see about. But I think I can buy it tomorrow, all right."

"Tomorrow?" In spite of his long experience, the salesman was unable to quench in his eyes a little eager light. Business had been bad for several weeks. Suddenly he saw himself in a picture. In his bungalow in the suburbs, at dinner, he was telling his wife of the sale, dropping the news negligently, as though it were not news thirsted for.

He looked at his watch. "You'd like to have another demonstration?"

"Yes. Can I drive? Can I?"

"There's an hour before closing time. All right; we'll go around the lake."

### III

THE afternoon was golden and reflected itself in the smooth asphalt. Will shot the Nonpareil out onto the boulevard that circled the lake. He twined her in and out of the traffic, delighting in the bursts of speed with which she answered the slightest pressure of his foot upon the accelerator, delighting in the elastic, buffered checking of her course whenever his whim so commanded it.

"The beauty! The beauty!" his soul exclaimed silently. "Just like a bird, just like a bird, that's what she is!"

Once another car tried to race her. He pressed his toe down hard; her purr rose to a snarl and she passed the car, while her innermost being exulted in tune with her menacing voice. Finally, they were out of the traffic, and he let her out altogether. His chin in chest, he seemed to be dreaming.

"Here!" Hartley shouted. "Where are you going?"

The boulevard kept continuously turning to the left; but at this point a road went off a little to the right. It was a freak in the city's improvement—a road, as well paved as the boulevard, yet which went nowhere, which after three hundred feet came to an abrupt ending against a mass of shrubbery. Will had shot the Nonpareil into that.

"Look out!" Hartley warned tensely.

Will went on at full speed to the last possible moment, then brought her to an abrupt but elastic stop, her nose against the shrubbery.

"Gee, but she stops smooth!" he said ecstatically. "Just like in oil!"

Hartley was displeased. "Say, do you know what's on the other side of the shrubbery?"

"The old quarry," said Will with his smile. "It's full of water. We used to swim there when kids. It's got no bottom."

"Just ten feet more," said Hartley,

"and we'd have pitched down about two hundred feet."

"Did you feel her stop," said Will, still athrill. "Just like in oil. Just to the dot and the second, and just like in oil!"

"I'd rather you wait till you own her before you do anything like that again," Hartley growled. "And I'd rather not be sitting next to you when you do it. I'm not ready for the undertaker as yet!"

Will, the rapt smile still upon his face, did not answer.

At dinner that evening he asked his mother again about the Liberty Bonds.

"Mother," he said, when she had answered him, "could I have them? Could I have these bonds, mom?"

"Why, Will!" she exclaimed, astonished and compassionate. "What would you want with the bonds?"

He lowered his eyes to the table.

"I thought I could do something with them," he said at length. "Put them in some business I could work at."

"Why, Will, that's nice of you to think of something to do. Your father used to worry about it—about your not getting settled to something. And I too; we both worried. But Will, dear, I can't let you have the Liberty Bonds!"

She was silent a moment, thinking of the way she could make it clear to him.

"You see, Will, what your father left us, that mustn't be touched. There's just enough for us to live on; for you and me to live on. To live carefully, but at least without worrying. It would be very foolish to change any of the investments. I know you would work hard and do your best. But, Will, we're all alone, you and I, son; and we have enough to live on if we are careful and you stay home with me; we mustn't take any chances, we mustn't change anything."

In her heart was an alarm she dared not voice.

"Is it—is it some girl?" she wanted to ask. But she did not; and his next words allayed her fears.

"Oh, all right, mom," he said lightly. "All right!"

"It was just some of his childish talk. Poor Will!" she thought, much relieved.

\* \* \*

Will dreamed of the car that night, as he had now for several nights. It was not so much a clear vision as it was a dim sense, constant in his sleep, or riding in the car, and, when he awoke, a delicious memory along all his bones, and a nutty taste upon his tongue.

He dressed slowly in the morning, as one does on a holiday, and almost without knowing it, put on the suit he usually reserved for Sundays, and his new blue tie. He lingered over breakfast, and afterward loitered in the sun. At ten o'clock, though, he went in for his hat, placed it upon his carefully sleeked hair, and walked down to the automobile agency.

"Mr. Hartley," he announced, "I am going to buy that car."

"That's fine, Will," said Hartley. "You're getting the best there is. You'll never regret it. Got—have you the money with you?"

"I can get Liberty Bonds," said Will. "They're the same as money, ain't they?"

"Liberty Bonds!" The salesman was taken aback. "You mean you want to make the first payment with the Rover and with Liberty Bonds? Is that it?"

"Yes," said Will. "Isn't that all right? Liberty Bonds are just like money, ain't they?"

His naïve alarm touched the salesman.

"Well, perhaps," he said. "Wait a minute; I'll ask Middleton about it."

He returned in a moment with the big manager.

"Where are these bonds?" the latter asked. "Got 'em with you?"

"They're at the bank. The First National."

"We might accept them for cash, at the market rate."

"I'll get them," said Will, but hesitated. "Couldn't we go get them in the car?" he asked timidly.

"Sure," said Middleton, after a moment's pause. "You go with him, Hartley." He threw a glance at the bright day outside. "Wait a minute; I'll go

along, too. Gee, what a fine morning!"

They got into the Nonpareil, and Will drove to the National Bank.

"I'll go in and get them," he said, when they had pulled in against the curb. "Want to wait outside?"

"Sure; we'll wait right here," said Middleton. "Get a little sun."

He passed a cigar to Hartley, lit one himself, and stretched luxuriously.

Will went in and asked for Mr. Compton.

"Mr. Compton," he said when, after a wait, he had been ushered into the inner office, "could I have my mother's Liberty Bonds?"

The cashier looked at him, astounded.

"What do you mean, Will? Your mother's Liberty Bonds! Have you a note from her?"

"No; she just told me to ask you for them."

"Well," said the cashier, after a short deliberation, "if she wishes the bonds, she must give you written word to that effect. Go back home, Will, and tell your mother to write it out. No—I'll tell you: you say to her I should like to speak to her about the matter; that I should like to see her. Ask her to come and see me—that's it."

In the lobby Will waited a while, not knowing quite what next to do. But when he came out on the sidewalk, he had lost his discomfited air.

"Say, Mr. Middleton," he said, "the bonds ain't there. Mother has taken them out—I didn't know. So as to have them all ready, I guess. They're over at the house."

The two men looked at him, wondering.

"If you'll come over to the house, I'll get them."

Though the affair was taking an uncertain aspect, the day was fine, the idea of going back to the office irksome, and that of riding through the sunlit streets a pleasing one.

"All right," said Middleton. "Let's go on to the house."

When they had stopped before the house, Will said,

"Wait a minute; I've got to go into

the cellar to see about something. I'll be back soon."

#### IV

WILL did not know just why he was doing this; but somehow it seemed a step toward getting the car—the car without which he could not live. He went around the house into the garage, then pushed through the rough door into the cellar. He groped, his eyes still uncertain with the sudden change of light, toward the old discarded bureau, and, having reached it, sat down on the damp earth floor, his back against the bureau, his knees drawn up to his chin.

He squatted there, perfectly still. Through a small dust-caked window a little sunlight passed in and made a bluish yellow spot. There was no sound here, but now and then a tremor told of the passing of some vehicle along the street. What seemed to be a long time passed thus.

Then, from the front of the house where he had left the men, a faint agitation began. He heard his name called, the sound coming to him much muffled. The call now passed along the side of the house, becoming clearer. It was Hartley.

"Will; where are you, Will?"

Abruptly, it was very close; it was in the garage itself.

"Will—where the deuce have you gone?"

There followed a long moment of immobility and silence. The searcher seemingly had stopped in the garage; he was looking around. Now, he had spied the open cellar door.

"Are you in there, Will?"

Will rose noiselessly and, out of the bureau drawer, slipped his automatic. He shelled it from its case, then, squatting down again, waited, the gun dangling loose between his legs.

"Where the devil are you, Will?"

Hartley stood in the opening of the door, hesitant. He took two steps within.

"Is that you, Will?"

He had caught sight of the form

squatted so strangely against the old bureau.

"What's the matter—are you sick?"

He came forward, uncertainly, across the rough earthen floor, in the gray light. "What's the matter; aren't you going to get those bonds?"

Will rose and pointed his gun.

"Hands up!" he said.

The salesman, startled, sent his hands up, then, recovering, started to lower them again.

"Say, Will, for God's sake—that's a devil of a joke—"

"Hands up!"

His hands raised, the salesman observed the boy carefully in the dim light.

"Say, Will," he pleaded, "don't be crazy. Now, don't be crazy. Why, Will—there isn't twenty in my pocket! And for that—"

"I don't want anything out of your pocket," said Will, somberly.

With his chin down and to one side, he looked as though he were thinking. But he could not have told why he was doing what he did. Except that, in some way, it was a step. A step toward the Nonpareil—standing out there, so shiny in the sun—which presently, if he did not do something, they would take away.

The same urge now showed him the next step.

"Come over here and stand by the bureau," he said.

Hartley complied, giving him a half inquisitive, half quizzical glance as he passed.

"There's a hair rope in the drawer, with two loops. Put your hands through the loops."

The salesman balked, and suddenly Will found himself convulsed with a bitter energy.

"Put your hands in the loops!" he snarled, and violently he poked the gun against the salesman's ribs.

Hartley flushed, then paled, then regained his vaguely ironical manner and placed his hands within the loops.

"Bring your hands here."

Hartley complied.

While he held his gun at Hartley's heart, Will gave a sharp tug to the riata end which was hanging to the ground; the two loops tightened about Hartley's wrists and drew them together.

The salesman's manner changed.

"For God's sake, Will, don't be crazy! Now, don't be crazy! Let my hands go! Do anything you want, but don't do that. Don't hold my hands tied this way!"

But Will, pulling on the rope, was drawing him to the coalbin. At each of the outer corners of the bin was a post. He brought Hartley up against one of these posts, and with the end of the riata, made him fast.

He stood still, considering, not satisfied. And as he considered, his hand met the coiled cord which, the day before, he had laid across the wall of the coalbin, and now he knew what to do. Taking the cord, he began to wind it around Hartley, each turn going also around the post.

"For God's sake, Will! What do you think you are doing? Don't be crazy! Let me go!"

But Will, without a word, continued to wind the rope. He had begun around the ankles and was gradually rising. Finally, a turn went around the neck, loosely. But a sudden convulsing tensing of physical energy caused him to snap the next turn tight, and the next tighter. Hartley's pleading ceased abruptly, and he now began to make a queer noise in his throat.

The queer noise, somehow, produced in Will the effect of a decisive signal, and picking up the bat from where, in the coalbin, it had stood erect since the day before, he stood back and swung.

To the sharp rapping sound the salesman relaxed within the ropes which held him up, and Will, with gritted teeth, struck, struck, struck and struck. Struck the loose, baglike form which, to each blow, dissolved more and more within the ropes.

He was panting when he stopped.

He stopped, brushed the hair back from his eyes, wiped his brow with the back of his hand, waited till he had re-

covered his breath, then, picking up his gun, went back to the bureau and, squatting as he had before, the gun loose between his knees, once more waited.

Again everything was very still. In his mind's eye he could see the Nonpareil out there in front glistening in the sun.

A fly buzzed around him several times, then lit on his left hand. With his right hand he waved it away.

Once more life began to stir. Out in front a faint shout sounded. It was repeated along the side of the house. Finally it was in the garage. Middleton, the big manager, was seeking his salesman.

He was in the garage now. Will rose and, with a light, limping run, streaked to the door, picking up the bat as he passed. The door opened inward; he posted himself behind it.

"Hello—are you fellows in there?"

Middleton stood in the doorway. Across the door's rough boards Will could hear his fat-man's breathing, could feel the warmth of his near paunch.

"Hartley—where are you? *Where* are you? Quit your joshing!"

He took two steps within, in the gray light. The strange, huddled shadow against the post near the bin drew his attention. He could not make out what it was, could not make it out. Curiously he approached it. Even as he stood near, looking at it close, he could not make out just what that strange, contorted yet limp thing was. But abruptly he did, suddenly he did, and with a compressed cry like the squeak of a mouse, he turned heavily on his heels to flee, to get out of this abominable gray place, this trap.

What he faced, as he turned toward the door, was Will and the upraised bat. His features had just time to arrange themselves in an expression of deep astonishment at the transformation before him, at the livid, twisted face of the boy whom he had regarded so lightly; then, just as with the speed of a camera shutter, they were shifting toward a readjustment to a complete

and terrible understanding, the bat struck with a dull, firm tap, and they ceased to express.

Will continued striking, with gritted teeth. Now and then the bat caught in some loose flap of clothes at his feet, paralyzing his movement as if in a dream. An increase of rage possessed him then, and his next blow, once freed, was that of a giant.

Finally, Will squatted down to rest and to wait what to do next.

After a while he got up, untied Hartley and toppled him backward into the coalbin.

Middleton gave him more work. He had to get the little stretcher on casters which he used in the garage when working under the Rover. The raising over the front boards of the bin was a terrific fight with something malevolently passive. But at last it was done; both were in the bin now, strangely sprawled, with seemingly more arms and legs than there should have been.

He threw some empty coal sacks in. Everything was covered now.

He could hardly wait; but he made himself do so. He made himself wash up at the tap in the garage, where he kept a tin basin and a comb. After he had washed, he wet his hair and sleeked it, being very careful about the part. His face, in the cracked glass, looked rosy and fresh.

Now, still restraining himself from running, he went around the house to the front. And there she was, alone, his. She seemed larger than he remembered her, with finer lines, shining still more brightly—the Nonpareil. His hand passed over her steel flank in a caress.

Suddenly he fell forward and threw his arms about the hood.

He got up quickly again and looked up and down the street. No—no one had seen him; the street was still empty.

## V

WILL got into the car and started the engine. But he remained as he was, listening to the gentle purring. No, this was not quite right; something was missing.



In a moment he knew what it was, and, getting out, ran up the steps of the porch and let himself in with his latch-key. He continued right up to his mother's room on the second floor. She gasped and dropped her knitting, startled by the impetuosity of his entrance.

"Mom—mom! Come down and see my car. Come down and see the new car I got! Come on, and I'll take you out for a ride!"

Her face, which was recovering its old placidity, took on a slightly scared look.

"Willie, what do you mean? *How* did you get a new car?"

"They're going to let me have it and pay for it on time. They're going to let me have it, and I'm going to make lots of money taking parties around, and I'm going to pay for it that way!"

"Mercy's sakes!" said the mother.

She was contemplating him benignly over her spectacles.

"Who would have thought it!" she murmured. "Who would have thought it, Will, that you should become such a business man! Pop used to worry about you. I always did tell him you'd come out all right!"

"Come on, quick, mom! Come on and take a ride in my car!"

She rose, trembling with the pathetic feeble haste of the old.

"I'll put on my black alpaca and my bonnet and shawl. Wait downstairs, Will; I'll be ready in a minute."

Will went downstairs, running all the way to the car. He waited a time by her side, then he got a cloth and, stooping here and there along the lustrous body, rid it of every grain of dust. He looked under and examined the running gear; he turned a greasecup here and there. He resumed his waiting, standing by her side. A fly settled on the body. He waved it away, then nodded to himself. At length his mother appeared, and he helped her proudly into the car.

"Just watch, mom; just feel her; smooth as velvet!"

He threaded his way in and out of the traffic, then, with a wide whirring

turn, swung her into the boulevard that skirted the lake.

"Watch her go!" he cried, and the Nonpareil leaped eagerly to its highest speed.

The wind was streaming to their right and left. Now and then he bent down to his mother a delighted and inquiring look, which she answered with an uncertain smile.

"She just floats, she just flies!" he shouted; and he felt her old hand on his arm detainingly.

"Now watch her stop!"

He had come to the unfinished branch of road which, while the boulevard kept circling to the left, went off to the right and ended abruptly in the screen of bush on the other side of which was the old quarry's plunge. He pulled into this direction, then shut off the gas, braked and, when it seemed impossible that they should ever halt in time, brought the Nonpareil to a stop with its nose against the green screen.

Both his mother's hands, this time, were clutching his arm.

"Oh," she cried, "you must never do that again, Will! Oh, I thought we were gone!"

He was laughing in delight.

"Guess what's behind those bushes, mom! It's the old quarry, where I used to swim. There ain't no bottom to it at all, mom!"

"Stop telling me such terrible things! And please, Will, let's get away from here. You've got me all shivery!"

He complied amiably, and backed the car out.

But as they went on, along the lake, his mother's pleasure—a wavering one from the first—was now gone.

"I'm a little tired," she began to say. "Shouldn't we go home, Will?"

"Just a bit more, mom; just a bit more!"

But finally she prevailed upon him to take her home.

## VI

WHEN Will awoke the next morning it was with the sudden delicious memory of his new possession. When a boy

he used to awaken on the morning following Christmas with just that feeling. Once, a glistening red and silver top that hummed had given him that feeling for days. For days he had awakened wondering what there was to be happy about, and then had remembered the top. Now it was the Nonpareil.

He gulped his breakfast and soon was out in the car.

There was something wanting. No one at his side to thrill with him to the joys of the Nonpareil. When he saw ahead of him little Marjorie Lithe, he brought the car to a stop by her side.

She had been wont to come to the house in the past, but she had not come for some time. And now her pigtailed were gone, and her eyes were much softer than they had ever been.

"Want a ride, Marjorie? Come on and have a spin in my fine new car!"

"Oh, Will—is that car really yours?"

"It's mine, all right. Come on, and see how she goes. We'll go out into the country. We'll go out to Bellefarm!"

"But Will, I'm on my way to the library, and then I must shop."

"Come anyway. It's a fine day."

"I should tell Mother!"

"Oh, that's all right. We'll be back by noon."

"Well, all right, then, Will. But you'll surely bring me back by noon!"

They went whirling out into the summer landscape, and the only stops were of Will's solicitude for his car, his stops for water and oil, his stops to inspect tires, to look into the hood, to wipe off the little flecks of earth which now and then spotted the beloved body. And when, at noon, he had set Marjorie down before her house, she lingered, looking up at the strange nice boy who had ridden with her through the morning.

"I'll wager, Will, that you like cars better than people. Isn't that so, Will?" she asked, a little wistfully.

He squirmed slightly and giggled. "I reckon that's right, Marj!"

"And you like this car better than

anybody. Better than any girl, better than any girl in the world."

"I guess that's right, Marjorie."

"Well, good-by, Will. Thank you very much for the ride. It was a very nice ride. And the car is just splendid!"

"She is a peach, isn't she?"

Marjorie laughed—tenderly. "Yes, Will, she is a peach. Go ahead and love your old car."

As he neared home, a black wagon, a single old horse between its shafts, was standing in front of the house. The back of the wagon, which was like a long, low, rough black box, was toward him, and he could see that the two low doors were open.

The Nonpareil checked a little, to a short hesitation, then came purring on and nosed up against the black wagon; and the chief of police, who was standing on the house steps, stepped across the sidewalk.

"You had better come along with us, Will," he said.

Will said nothing, and remained seated as he was.

The chief called a plainclothes man who was standing in the alley. "Come on!"

He reflected a moment. "We might as well go in this car and leave ours with Jerome. Tell him we're going, and that we're leaving the car for him."

The plainclothes man went around the house and was heard shouting into the cellar. He reappeared.

"Can you drive this car?" the chief asked of him.

"Sure; I can drive anything."

"All right; you drive. Will, you sit back here with me."

Will slipped over and sat by the chief. But the latter, now, with a touch of his hand on the plainclothes man's shoulder, delayed the start. From his superior height, he was looking down at Will.

"Do you want to see your mother?" he finally asked, curiously.

"Where is mother?" asked Will.

"In the back parlor. She don't—she ain't seen you come."



"All right," said Will, stepping to the running-board.

"You go right on," said the Chief to the plainclothes man. "We'll come along after a while with Jerome."

But Will, with the movement of a child caught making a mistake, threw himself back into his seat.

"Let's go now," he said.

"It's just as well," said the Chief, rather relieved at being spared the scene he foresaw.

The plainclothes man started the car; he rasped the gears, and Will's eyes blinked.

They drove along. The chief, silently, was studying the suspect. He had known the boy for years, as nearly everyone else in town; he had seen him grow up. Now, all he could do was look; look at that fresh smooth face, that modest and seemly behavior; look and wonder.

Suddenly Will raised his eyes to him. "Say," he whispered—a whisper of entreaty, like a little child's—"say, Chief, let me drive her, will you?"

"Drive what where?"

"Let me drive her—to where we're going."

The Chief, his brooding curiosity still further intrigued, decided abruptly. The car was stopped, the places were changed. They went on with Will at the wheel, the Chief at his side, the plainclothes man behind.

They came to the big crossing. The way to the police station at the town hall was straight ahead; to the right the street led into the lake boulevard. Will slowed up.

"Say, Chief, let's go around the lake. Let's go around the lake just once!"

"Go ahead," said the Chief, resolved now on his psychological study.

Will eased the car into the boulevard. The Chief, turning, nodded to the plainclothes man, who bared his gun altogether now and held it ready for any suspicious maneuver. The Chief turned his attention back to Will.

The boy had taken off his cap; driving with hair flowing back and with eyes

distant, he seemed in a trance; and the slight turn downward and to one side of his head gave him an appearance of listening, of gathering within himself all the ecstasy of purring vibration beneath him. The Nonpareil, to his amorous mastery, flew in long, rhythmic swoops.

They came to the freak road which went nowhere, which ended in a few hundred feet against the shrubbery screening the old quarry, and smoothly—so smoothly the Chief for a moment did not realize what was happening—Will turned into it.

A shout came from the chief, a shout from the plainclothes man. But they had been sitting there on the alert and vigilant; a second or two sufficed to shake off their paralysis and to act. Reaching forward, the chief turned off the ignition, then with both hands pulled on the emergency brake. From behind a shot rang out, and Will fell forward on the wheel, sprawled across it with arms extended as if in embrace.

The car, with locked wheels, hurled on in great leaps. It crashed through the shrubbery, pivoting, as it did, like a man with assailants on all sides, then stopped sideways on the quarry's brink. The Chief and the plainclothes man sprang out.

They thought everything was over. But there still remained in the flanks of the Nonpareil a vestige of the terrific impetus given it by its young master. Side to the abyss, it now began to slowly topple into it, and Will, sprawled across the wheel, seemed to be doing it with a suggestive pressure of his limp body. Instinctively the two policemen clutched at the steel sides in a futile gesture. But slowly and firmly it tore itself from their bleeding nails and continued to turn.

It was on the slope now. It turned over once, slowly, then a second time much more quickly, then a third time ever so much more quickly again, then it rolled and rolled, gathering speed as the slope became steeper and steeper, till it vanished altogether, with a queer frivolous flip of its four wheels, over the second brink.

The two men, arrested in frozen attitudes, listened, it seemed to them, a long time. Then from deep down, as if it were from the very bosom of the earth, there came to them a heavy, flaccid wet thump, then a jingling as from a fountain.

Carefully, side by side, they slid down the slope till they had come to the second brink, where the descent became a vertical wall. Lying down on their

stomachs, they looked down the wall into the green lake down there. From its bubbling center pretty round waves were rippling out to the round sides. In the middle of this circle a cap floated.

"I used to swim down there when I was a boy," the Chief said. "It ain't got no bottom."

"Well, he's down there," said the plainclothes man.

"With his car," said the Chief.



## Under the Spell

*By Abigail W. Cresson*

SHALL I mope, thinking on my soul,  
And tire my flustered brain,  
When I can feel upon my head  
The fingers of the rain?

When I can feel beneath my feet  
The wet grass, soft and cool;  
When I can dip my body in  
The brown deeps of a pool?

When I can hurry with the wind  
And loiter with the sun,  
Why should I fret about my soul?—  
Perhaps I haven't one.

Why am I better than a leaf  
Or wiser than a flower?  
Why should I want another life  
Who have this changing hour?

Oh, Pan, come play your pipes again,  
For I am but a faun—  
I'll dance like sunlight on the grass  
Until the day is gone!



# The Life of a Hero

*By Lawrence Vail*

LIKE the excellent Don Quixote, knight of La Mancha, Silas Spool was inordinately fond of novels of adventure. There was hardly an episode in the numerous cycles of mediæval romances with which he was unacquainted. The happiest hours of his youth were those spent imagining himself in the heroic rôles of Launcelot and Tristan, Roland of Roncevalles and Amadis of Gaul.

As in the case of Cervantes' hero, Mr. Spool's early reading had a marked effect on his mind. I do not wish to imply that he was mentally deranged: Idealism is not necessarily lunacy. He was—how shall I put it?—a trifle eccentric, less easily satisfied than his fellows by the common routine of living. It became his ambition to distinguish himself by some heroic deed.

At twenty a small fortune left him made him independent. He gave up his position in the Rye Exchange Bank in order to concentrate on the development of his heroic vocation.

It was not long before he discovered that the spirit of the times, which made for security, stood in the way of the realization of his desires. Obstacles, in the way of safety devices, opposed him at every venture.

"Alas!" sighed Mr. Spool. "How can one be a hero in this age of fire-escapes, regulated traffic, anti-skid tires, parachutes, life-belts, lighthouses, and other precautionary contrivances?"

The story of Mr. Spool's career is the story of his disappointments. In addition to the accident of birth, which had thrown him into an unromantic century, he was repeatedly being foiled

by circumstance. Was there a fire in the Bronx, he found himself in quest of perilous adventure on the Lower East Side. He was riding in the Elevated at the time of the great Subway panic. During the memorable summer when sharks sated their appetites with the ankles and toes of a dozen fair ladies, Mr. Spool was summering in the White Mountains. The very day he reached the coast the cautious fish took their departure for Mexican waters. At the time of the Calabrian Earthquake, he was in Ireland. During the Dublin riots, he was in Switzerland. And he was prevented from active participation in the great war by an attack of measles followed by rheumatism which confined him to a Y. M. C. A. canteen.

In his thirtieth year Mr. Spool laid his case before the Bishop of Ham. He was told by that subtle prelate that whereas physical courage, properly directed, was one of the higher virtues, it sank into comparative insignificance beside moral courage from which could be obtained a sweeter and more enduring satisfaction. Moral courage, Mr. Spool was told, consisted in doing the things you particularly dislike with a smile.

After a conscientious consultation with himself, Silas reached the conclusion that he nursed an abhorrence for turnips, cold water, and the American stage. He therefore proceeded to take cold baths every morning, eat turnips every meal, and attend every night the various Broadway theatres. And, though he appeared at first to gain nothing save influenza, indigestion and

boredom from these experiments, he forced himself to face the world with a smile.

Still, that sense of exultation which he expected as a reward for his moral heroism delayed in making itself felt. He decided that there must be something he disliked more than turnips, cold water, and the American stage. Searching in his mind he discovered that he had always had an inclination toward young pretty women and a distaste for matrimony.

Of all the ladies of Mr. Spool's circle, none was more unattractive than Hope Jones. She dressed badly, she was forty, she had opinions of her own. In the centre of a gray parched complexion her nose, broad and flabby, flamed like an over-ripe tomato. To her, on a night in June, Mr. Spool made a proposal of marriage. She accepted immediately.

Hope, I have said, had opinions of her own. It was soon apparent that these opinions were at variance with those held by her husband. This Hope found unendurable. With the zest of a missionary and the technique of a cattle driver she proceeded to combat Silas's quixotic tendencies. She would, she determined, knock the nonsense out of his head. She would make a man of him.

Silas soon discovered that Hope's idea of a man was an ever willing escort to functions from which genial men and pretty women were conspicuously absent, someone always on the spot, never in the way, practised in the arts of fetching and carrying. For ten years Silas sought to fulfil these requirements. Remembering the words of the Bishop of Ham, he exerted himself to meet his trials with the bravest of smiles.

It happened, however, that in this latter respect, he was not always successful. The line of his lips was more suggestive of melancholy, embittered resignation, forced hilarity, than of content.

Still, though Mr. Spool had conceded the superiority of moral courage, there were days when he felt a return

of his ancient restlessness for a more sensational manner of heroism. He was in one of these moods during a certain week end he spent with his wife at Hot Sands. As he nervously paced the beach, he observed a woman far out beyond the surf who appeared to be having trouble with the current. Without a moment's hesitation he flung himself, fully dressed, into the sea. A feverish exultation surged through him as he struggled against the breakers. At last it had come—the hour for which he had been waiting so long!

In spite of ten years of service as dish washer, parcel carrier, errand boy in the employ of his estimable wife, Mr. Spool soon experienced a sudden overwhelming lassitude. Had it not been for Selma Olsen, woman swimming champion of Scandinavia, who carried the distressed would-be hero to shore, there is little doubt that Mr. Spool would have found a death suiting his ambition. As it was, he almost succumbed to humiliation. He had been rescued by the very woman he had intended to rescue.

It looked now as though Silas were cured of his vain craving for glory. Mrs. Spool readily admitted to her women friends that she had made a man of him. An old man perhaps, but anyhow a man. There was no husband in Manhattan, she boasted, more handy with mop, broom and dish rag. He was a wizard with parcels, having been known to carry twelve on ten fingers. And he never, she added, spoke unless spoken to.

And yet, though no one suspected it, behind the meek, henpecked husband, the dreamer and would-be hero existed. It was still with him—this thirst for heroic, flamboyant behavior, all the stronger for suppression and concealment. Some day, he knew, he must find an outlet for the romantic energy accumulated within him during the last half century. Eventually he must pass through peril and terror to rescue someone from calamity.

In one respect Mr. Spool had altered, having come to consider his heroism

precious. Thirty years sooner he might have been willing to risk his life for any hussy calling him hysterically from the window of some flaming house. Now he had become more fastidious—the person to be rescued must be worthy of his heroism.

Finally, after debating the matter for a number of years, Silas reached the conclusion that the only person worthy of being rescued was himself. He would liberate himself from the tyranny of Mrs. Spool.

He realized with a gorgeous thrill of joy and terror that this process required no mean show of courage. He was too old to cause her to divorce him by compromising himself with some other woman. If he deserted her, ran away,

she would certainly pursue him, the critical state of the servant question rendering his services necessary. In truth there was only one thing to do. Hope must be eliminated from the land of the living.

The proof of Mr. Spool's success is that he is now serving time in the penitentiary. Of all the inmates of that sinister abode, he is no doubt the most cheerful. A smile of sweet content, almost mystic in quality, never leaves his face as he goes about his daily routine, breaking stones on the state roads. And this shows that His Grace, the Bishop of Ham, may have been at fault in his assertion that more genuine satisfaction was to be obtained from moral than from physical courage.



## The Egotist

*By Jay Jarrod*

HIGH above in the heavens a star twinkled. "Ah," cried the little hop toad, gazing upward and puffing out its chest, "someone is flirting with me."



AMONG women, argument loosens the tongue. Among men, it loosens the teeth.



PROHIBITION will be a success when all the copper kettles are worn out.



# The Confessions of an Old Man

By Charles G. Shaw

I LIKE alcohol in every bibulous form, from Romanée Conti '58 to the Agua Ardiente of the Mexican Indians. I like the game of Jai-Alai, as played in Havana, and *moûles Marinière*, Whistler's etchings and the music in "Shuffle Along," Scotch homespun and the cigarette girl at the Knickerbocker Grill. I dislike winter sports and moving pictures, *débutantes* and Empire furniture, sweetbreads and Kansas City. I have never been to Detroit, Mich., and haven't the slightest intention of ever going. I once witnessed a game of curling in Montreal and thereafter avoided that city as the plague. I have courted women in London, Paris, New York, Berlin, Vienna, Madrid, Copenhagen, Geneva, Rome, Venice, Cairo, Tunis, Bombay and Atlantic City. I have been married four times. I have never been in love.

Once, while traveling between Moscow and Petrograd, a tourist from Chanute, Kansas, inquired of me the position of Cleveland in the American League. I choked him to death on the spot and hurled his bloated carcass from the window of the compartment. I have never had a friend whose Christian name was Joel. I have never been on intimate terms with an Albino.

Many years ago I attended a dinner party where water was the sole liquid

served. I have not spoken to either the host or hostess since. I have never known the Abyssinian for "little one."

I believe the most beautiful woman I have ever beheld was one I encountered in an opium den in San Francisco before the fire. The ugliest female I ever gazed upon was in the Restaurant de Paris on the Puerto del Sol, Madrid. As a very small boy I once learned the Serbian alphabet. I have never had the slightest occasion to make use of it.

I prefer Algerian hasheesh to any of the Asiatic opiates and steak *minute* to Chicken Chow Mein. I have never played cribbage. One night in the rooms of the Casino at Monte Carlo an Hungarian Baron revealed to me a system by which the bank might be broken. I left the next morning and have never returned to Monte Carlo since. In a storm off the Dalmatian coast I once remained pickled for seven days. I do not know how to speak Danish.

Among my pet aversions are cork-tipped cigarettes, Fenimore Cooper's novels, men who wear white socks, women who telephone me at four in the morning to find out if I discovered their gold mesh-bag in the taxi-cab, charity benefits, golf, paper towels, modern advertising, near-beer and Long Beach.

I am wholly unmoved as to the details of my funeral.





# The Daughter

By Ruth Suckow

I

PEOPLE used to ask how Mary Lane could stand it. She looked so delicate herself, tall and slender, with her large pale blue eyes behind the thick lenses of her glasses, and her wide drawn mouth. Ever since she was a child she had waited hand and foot on her mother.

Mrs. Lane was neither poorly, nor ailing, nor in a bad way. Half the women in Shell Spring were that, it seemed. She was a Real Invalid. On soft, warm days she crawled out to her little porch and sat in a big rocker in the shadow of the clematis vine. Then her neighbors came up to her and told her how glad they were to see her able to be out, while they tried to hide from her their shock at the sight of her, bent and shrunken, her skin stretched like yellow tissue paper over the bones, and the veins crawling over her sunken temples. She looked so much worse outdoors in the light.

"I didn't realize," they would murmur to each other afterward. "Well, she can't last much longer."

And when she did, outliving many younger and stronger women, and when every summer saw her out again, they declared that it was a miracle.

She looked much more natural in the old sitting-room of her little house, where she had sat so long that the place belonged to her. Her big chair caught the light from the west window. Her plants, which Mary tended for her, filled the other window. Her footstool—a box covered with the remnants of the red-flowered ingrain carpet—stood be-

fore her chair. Beside it, the little walnut table that held her spectacles, the checkered box in which she kept her pills, and the big soft rag that she held to her mouth when she coughed. She was in the air of the room—close, slightly stale, with an ancient smell that came from medicine, the carpet, from the green-painted woodwork warped and crackled with heat.

Her complaint was mysterious. Sometimes women whispered it to other women. The other women shook their heads significantly, murmuring, "Is that so? Well, I just thought—"

They said it was because she had worked herself to death when she was a girl. She had been one of the Welterlens, the oldest girl in a family of ten. She had brought up all the rest of them. Her mother was not strong and always too busy to attend to the children after they were once born.

Mary spoke of it only as "mamma's trouble." Mary had to get up in the dead of the night, shivering across the bare icy floor to heat water on the gasoline stove in the kitchen. She could hardly ever leave that dingy little white house. Church meetings were her only dissipations.

It had always been so. Mr. Lane had been dead for many years. He had left them just enough to scrape along on. And even when he was living he had not helped much, believing such things to be woman's duty. It had always fallen upon Mary. She had had no childhood or girlhood, it seemed. Always, when the other girls had asked her to do anything, it had been "mamma needs me." She had gone on patiently,



lovingly, with no recompense that could be seen, and scarcely a word of appreciation. In all those years she had never done anything just as she should. It was always: "No, no, you're hurting me! Why did you do that? Where have you been?" with reproachful moan that cut Mary to the heart.

Mary could not even have the gift of loneliness in the nights. She had to sleep with her mother in the stuffy little bedroom off the sitting-room. Her mother was nervous if she was gone a moment. She dared not turn all night. The slightest creak of the bed wakened the invalid. Everything wakened her—the front door that had creaked for years, the dropping of coal in the stove. She would start up, rigid: "Mary! What's that? Go see." If Mary paused for a moment to see the stars through the syringa bush outside the window, there came that high, fretful call from the bed: "Mary! Why don't you come? You know I can't rest until you do."

There were bluish-brown shadows under Mary's eyes, her nostrils were pinched, the veins stood out on her thin hands. She looked ready to drop, the women who watched her said. They wondered how she could stand it.

## II

BUT Mary did stand it. She was always there, always helpful, always ready. The strange inner flame of tenderness that some women have seemed to sustain her. Perhaps it was because it went on and on, imperceptibly, so that she only realized for sudden gasping moments how far life had gone. At any rate she was never impatient, never angry. And she had learned the comfort of little things.

The hour in the afternoon when Mrs. Johnson sat with her mother she was free. Sometimes she stopped in to see Lily Peterson and her children; sometimes to see old Mrs. Watts. It was an adventure for her to enter another house, she was so seldom away from home. Or she went to the library, looking over the row of recently acquired

fiction with a sense of adventure and promise. She liked refined, kindly books with troubles, but with the certainty of the women all being satisfactorily married in the end. Or a nice book of travel, illustrated—one of Stoddard's Lectures.

These things took her away from her own sorrows:

The two hours in the morning when the sun shone in a patterned square on the kitchen floor. The warm silence of the kitchen when the brown clock ticked loudly and the Leghorn rooster crowed drowsily in the yard. Or the afternoons when she sat beside the stove in her low cane-seated rocking-chair, reading and waiting for the bread to bake. The delicious smell of fresh bread, and the warm housewifely feel of it when she took it out of the oven and turned the loaves out upon the kitchen table. Church. Prayer meeting, where she was one of the handful of the faithful. Missionary meetings to which sometimes she could go, with their chatter, fancy work and the odor of coffee from the kitchen. . . .

And she liked to have her flock of Leghorns come strutting with absurd haste when she went out to the backyard, poking their necks in and out; and to carry the warm fresh eggs to the house through the sunshine.

Deeper things: The dependence of her mother upon her in the night, in the dark of the stuffy bedroom, the touch of her hot frail hands. . . .

This was her work, her task. It had always been. Life and the spirit could not prosper unless it were fulfilled. She felt as deep a loyalty, a responsibility, to her mother as she would have felt to her child. They called her a perfect daughter, and in this she felt a sad pride.

And then there was the yearly budding of the green things and the flowers that grew about the house in old-fashioned abundance—the three apple trees in the backyard, the lilacs and all the roses, the syringa bush beside the bedroom window, the cosmos, the hardy pinks, the tiger lilies and zinnias. Yet

there was a sadness in that recurrent blossoming, a sense of time passing, and unfulfilment. The fragrance of the syringa in the warm night was oversweet.

## III

BUT it was Henry who kept her lingering sense of youth alive. Mary had been engaged to Henry for so many years that even interested old ladies could hardly calculate the time. It had begun in high school. They were both quiet and hard-working, and had drifted naturally together.

Henry was one of the Acreses, who had a farm near Sandy Creek. He was a clerk now in the J. B. Boardman hardware store, but he had never lost the country look. His hands and feet were clumsy. His shoulders were thick and slightly bowed. His eyes were soft, dark, mute, like the eyes of farm animals.

Everyone in town spoke of him as Henry Acres. He had never been called Mister. He was treated as an old boy, never quite as a man. He was now a little gray—it gave his thick hair a dusty look—and there were two deep, deliberate creases in his forehead. He wore shabby coats and trousers that did not match. He always thought of himself as a boy. He was called good and reliable and steady-going. He could always be counted upon—in the store, in the Congregational Church, where he had long been an usher. For this reason no one troubled to be particularly courteous to him. He was always treasurer of the Sunday School, known as a thankless job. He dished out ice cream at the Sunday School picnic and kept the little boys from the river. He was one of the six or seven in the church who still went to prayer meeting. For years he had met Mary there and they had walked home together.

No one thought of them as either lovers or married people, although they were treated as a combination of the two. They were simply spoken of as "Henry and Mary." They were accepted in that rôle as one of the insti-

tutions of the town. Once in a while someone said, "Do you suppose they will ever get married?" But usually it was forgotten that they had ever contemplated it.

Besides prayer meeting night, which was Thursday, Henry came on Mondays to see Mary. Then he fixed the stove, the doors, whatever was out of order. If Mrs. Johnson came over, they sometimes walked to the library together. Not down Lovers' Lane, a little side road bordered with willow trees, because they somehow hated to meet the high school girls and boys who walked there. They felt out of place among them. In warm weather they sat on the porch and talked very softly together.

On such nights Mrs. Lane was usually worse and had one of her spells before morning. She always suspected that they had been talking about her. It seemed very hard to her, she sometimes told one of the sympathizing neighbors, that with all she had to bear she had to have Henry too. She might have had her daughter left to her, at least. The Lord was too cruel. They consoled her by assuring her that Mary was a good daughter and would never marry while her mother needed her. But Mrs. Lane said bitterly that Mary would get married and forget all about her as soon as she was dead. Well, it would not be long. That was the only mention made now of Mary's marriage.

Mary dreaded these nights. They made her feel guilty. But she would not give up Henry. Her loyalty clung to him also. Henry was still to her the awkward, slow, good-hearted country boy whom she had pitied and loved in school. She dared not think of him otherwise. But sometimes she felt obscurely guilty about him, too.

He had no one to look after him. There were spots on his coat, and little hairs sprinkling his coat collar. Sometimes he ushered with unblackened shoes. Such things were never offensive to her. They made her heart yearn over him. He needed her. He lived in a room over the real-estate office. How the place

must look! Henry had promised to sweep twice a week, but she was sure that he never got into the corners. What must his cooking be! He made his own breakfasts and got his dinners and suppers at Mrs. Stonebarger's boarding-house. Mary sent over fresh bread wrapped in dish towels, jelly, cookies and eggs. Henry carried them home after dark, for they both felt that it would not do to have people see him with these things. In summer she gave him flowers. Poor fellow! He never seemed to know what to do with them, but was shyly pleased at having them. It never occurred to him to decorate his room. Mary did all his washing for him, except his collars and Sunday shirts. She knew that he would have let such things accumulate forever.

But sometimes she felt, guiltily, that these things were not enough. Tears came to her eyes when she watched him go trudging back to his lonely room on bleak winter nights. It was no life for him at all. Sometimes Bessie, "the sister who had stayed at home," drove in from the country and brought him honey and fruit from the farm. Mary was indignant that, with all the abundance on the farm, they did not bring him more. But that was the trouble with Henry. He never put himself forward. It was the same with everyone. They did not give him his due. No one appreciated him, except herself. And sometimes she felt that this was her fault.

But what could she do? To leave her mother was impossible. Years ago she had cried about it, when she could hide somewhere away from the sound of her mother's voice. She had felt pulled two ways, and that the thing must end. But she had gradually become used to the situation, and Henry too. He was so patient. He understood. He seldom troubled her, never urged her any more. But she could see that he was angry and shamed when John Nash called out to them after prayer meeting: "Well, well, you two young ones going off like this! Don't you think you need a chaperon?"

She saw how people treated him and it filled her heart with remorseful pain.

But she could not think about it. She could not leave her mother, and her mother would never let Henry live with them.

He had not always been so patient. She remembered how he used to flare up at her. Then, when her mother had reproached him for being clumsy, he had been angry and left the house many times. But at the sight of Mary's hurt and helpless face he had always come back. He had said that they ought to be married in spite of everything, and refused sometimes to see the obstacles.

But such outbreaks were rare now. Life seemed to be settling down. Only, when Mary sometimes noticed his gray hair, and his aspect of forlornness, her heart would beat painfully. Once, on a night in spring, he had stood at the foot of the steps looking up at her, and the moonlight through the clematis vine had erased the two deep wrinkles. His face was pale, at the same time old and young, with the ghost of his boyhood upon it. It had looked up at her with a mute unconscious pathos.

Mary could see his face all night. It had troubled her with old smothered memories, with dim hauntings of youth and age. If she could have been alone that night—if she could have wept! She turned to her mother with a consecration of devotion. But something seemed to die in her. After that, when her mother was bitter and exacting, she could not seem to turn to the thought of Henry and the future with such consolation as she had always done.

Her mother was growing frailer. She was dry and brittle, like a withered leaf. But she hung on. Year after year. People ceased expecting that she would die at any moment, as they had always done. It seemed that things would always be just as they were now.

But one night, very suddenly and when no one expected it, she died.

The word went quickly about Shell Spring. "Old Mrs. Lane is dead." People said: "So the old lady is gone! I began to think she would last forever. Poor Mary! Well, she's free at last."

## IV

MARY was dazed. Her care of her mother had been so absorbing that it had left her no room for the terror of death. It seemed impossible that her mother was gone. She could not realize that she was free. She kept up her old habits. She stayed on alone in the little house, cherishing the cosmos and the asters that lingered in her garden—it was late summer.

Henry came to see her just as he had always done. He still lived in the dingy room above the real-estate office and cooked his solitary breakfasts. They went to church and prayer meeting. People said that they were waiting until "a decent time" had elapsed. But a year went by, and they were still going on in the old way.

"It's about time they were getting married, if they're ever going to," the women said knowingly.

The town began to laugh at them, instead of half contemptuously pitying them as it had always done. They became one of its standing jokes. What was the matter? Were they too poor? Henry must have something saved up by this time—he'd had time enough! They didn't expect to be any younger, did they? The other people at Mrs. Stonebarger's tried to tease Henry. But he seemed impervious. At church meetings, everywhere, there were sly allusions. People began to say that it was time somebody was waking them up.

John Nash was the one to do it. It was at prayer meeting, where they sat solemnly separated by a row of chairs. There was to be a Congregational convention at Oswego. John Nash, with a solemn face, proposed that "our good members, Henry Acres and Miss Mary Lane" be elected as delegates. They were free from the responsibilities, he said, that tied the other members at home. They were unanimously elected; and they went.

A number of inwardly delighted old women were at the windows to watch them leave for the two-ten train. It was years since Henry had gone out of

town. He carried an ancient valise, caved in at the sides. But Mary had seen to it that his suit was brushed. And he wore a new straw hat.

There was a wedding party at the station. Jim Grove and the oldest Minkler girl. Everyone was gay, excited, shouting. The station-boy grinned when he trundled out the luggage with big white streamers fluttering from it. A shower of rice fell like little hailstones all over the platform when the bride and groom ducked, laughing, into the train.

Henry and Mary followed.

Someone—no one could decide who—threw a mischievous handful of rice at them. People shouted. The little white grains pelted them. They could hear the people on the platform clapping. They scurried into the car and sat down together in one of the red plush seats. Mary's little hands in white cotton gloves lay pathetically loose in her lap. A few rice grains dribbled off the brim of Henry's hat. They could not look at each other.

But they were awake. A few weeks after that they were married, in the parsonage, with the minister's wife and daughter for witnesses, and no guests. Mary wore her old white dress with a sprig of syringa.

They lived together in the old Lane house. It seemed too bad—but it was the only sensible thing for them to do. Neither of them had any money to spare. The town laughed, was amazed, said—"At last, poor things!"—and got used to it. So did they, after a fashion.

## V

HENRY improved after his marriage. Everyone noticed it. Mary kept him brushed and dusted. He began to go briskly down the walk to the store. Even in church he refused to take all the thankless jobs. He said that he was doing enough. He had good food. Someone looked after his underwear. Suddenly he was a man. The traveling men who came to the store did not call him Henry. The children now growing

up spoke of him as Mr. Acres. Old J. B. Boardman was getting feeble and beginning to depend upon him more and more. His salary was raised.

But Mary was frail. When the burden she had held so long was lifted, she could not seem to stand upright again. She could not get used to going about among the women as one of them. To herself she was not Mrs. Acres, but still Mary Lane. Even now she could not sleep at night from the old feeling that her mother was needing her. She could not go to things. She had got out of the habit, she said. She could not seem to realize that the thing she had looked forward to for so long had happened.

After a while she knew that she was going to have a child. She tried to realize it. The presence of her mother was far more actual to her. This was a kind of phantom—but sometimes, as she went about the old house, her heart beat thrillingly. It seemed almost true. She wanted to believe in it—but she could not, quite. It filled Henry with a deep content. But Mary thought of it wistfully, as of dreams that are too beautiful to really happen.

This feeling was a kind of prophecy. For she died when the child was born.

Henry would never get over it, people said. They felt the remorseful pity of those who see a joke turned suddenly to tragedy. They thought of the long years that these two had waited. Poor Henry. He had spent most of his life waiting. He had seemed so happy these last few months—and now this!

## VI

But he did get over it.

It was not very long until people began to speak of him and Mayme Francis, the milliner. A creature as different from Mary! And from Henry, too—but Henry had changed, they said, since his marriage. Even so, it was difficult to connect him with Mayme Francis. She had a large, rosy, well-tended face and a bosom that billowed under blouses of tinted georgette. When she walked she came tilting forward on

Spanish heels that made her plump ankles bend. The old women discussed her and wondered what *she* could want of *him*. It was an insult to Mary's memory, they said. Although there was nothing really against the woman as far as anyone knew.

Henry's years of waiting, of hermitage up over the real-estate office, he now seemed to erase as easily as if they had never been. It was as if he had been storing up his youth all these years and was only now letting it out. He was more than changed. He was transformed. He ushered only at the morning service at church and refused to have anything to do with the Sunday School. Prayer meeting saw him no more. But it seemed strange, always, people said, to see him with someone else than Mary.

They sold the old house when they were married and moved into the upstairs apartment of what had been the Farmers' Bank Building. Their furniture was new, shiny and flimsy. Mayme put up curtains of a bright-colored thin cretonne with enormous bluebirds and flowers.

Old Boardman was quickly getting worse. He was hardly responsible any more. Henry practically ran the business. When the old man died, he would buy the store with some of Mayme's money. She still worked at her millinery trade. She was a good manager. She would make it pay.

The child was a little girl. Timid, silent, large-eyed from the start. Frail Bessie, the sister who had stayed at home, cared for her at first. The little girl was happy out on the farm. Her wan little cheeks grew faintly pink. Old ladies—friends of Mary and Mrs. Lane—who had wondered what the child would do, were satisfied about her now that Bessie had her, they said. She sat out in her little chair and cooed at the roosters and the waddling ducks in the farm-yard. Bessie adored her.

But Mayme said that it did not look well. No one was going to say that she was trying to get out of doing her duty. People in this town had said enough



about her as it was. She "took" the little girl. She made her pretty dresses and always kept her clean and dainty. She "did everything for her," her friends said.

But when they came to see her, she pointed out to them the queer ways of the child. How unresponsive she was, and how she would creep away and seem to watch things and never say a word. Mayme hoped she wasn't secre-

tive. She was no more like her father, Mayme said. . . . Yes sir, that was always the way. She always sidled off like that from folks. Mayme liked up-and-coming youngsters, she said, like her sister Birdie's Ethelyn. Go to the lady, why don't you, Mollie? No, sir, that was the way she was. You see! Mayme sighed. She didn't know. . . .

It was easy enough to see whose daughter she was.



## Thomas' End

*By John McClure*

GAY Thomas was foretold in history:

Gay Thomas was the Golden Ass.  
Gay Thomas fathomed every mystery  
That ever came to pass.

Gay Thomas wrote a book of wonder  
Explaining heaven, explaining hell.  
(Gay Thomas understood the thunder  
And Life and Death as well).

Gay Thomas told the Queen of Sheba,  
Gay Thomas told the King of Spain,  
Gay Thomas told ten thousand people  
Buried, he could rise again.

Gay Thomas ate a cobra-pudding,  
Gay Thomas drank formaldehyde,  
Gay Thomas whistled at his funeral  
And lectured as he died.

Gay Thomas was laid out in linen.  
Gay Thomas braved the jaws of death.  
There were ten thousand weeping women  
Waited him with bated breath.

Gay Thomas calmed their foolish fears.  
Gay Thomas slyly winked at fate—  
And now it's twice ten thousand years  
Gay Thomas lies in state.

## Episode

*By Paul Tanaquil*

THE Scholar wrote upon the papyrus the words of many beautiful songs. For years he had walked up and down the highways and byways of the kingdom, and in his joy and in his despair, in travail, in want and in misery of affliction, he had looked deep into his heart, and what he had seen there he had transmuted into beautiful music.

The Warrior knew naught of words, but he was proud in the might of his strong right arm, and for the love of a white-breasted queen he fared forth against her enemies and carved a way to glory through the ranks

of the foe with his two-edged sword.

The Queen sat languorously upon her silken couch, playing with the long, golden strands of her loosed hair; now she held her hand before her eyes as though appraising its white transparency, now she laid it on her breast and uttered a little sigh of voluptuous satisfaction. And while the Scholar wrote upon his papyrus songs in favor of her beauty, and while the Warrior killed his tens of hundreds for the recompense of a light smile, she called for the newest of her slaves, a beautiful young Nubian with dark eyes and soft hands. . . .



THE one bad thing about a telegram is that ten words are too brief a space in which to make an effective plea for money.



KISSING in public has the fault that it leads to conjecture as to what goes on in private.



OF the thirty-six dramatic situations, women figure prominently in thirty-five.





# Répétition Générale

By H. L. Mencken and George Jean Nathan

## § 1

**M**ORONS.—A moron, according to the new psychology, is any adult whose mental capacity, on test, turns out to be that of a child of thirteen years or less. When the youth and chivalry of the Republic were being groomed for the abattoir in 1917 and 1918 such a test was applied to all of them. The results, lately published after a discreet wait, show that 47.3% of the white candidates for immortality were morons. The African gentlemen ran far ahead of that high mark: no less than 89% of them turned out to be morons. What the percentage would be if white and blacks were grouped I do not know, but certainly it would run beyond 50. In other words, more than half of the young men of the greatest nation ever seen in history are the intellectual peers of thirteen-year-old schoolgirls. Such is the end-product of a century of the little red schoolhouse!

The figures, it appears, have caused a painful sensation. The newspapers discuss them raucously, and no doubt they will soon engage Congress. But are they really surprising? Not to me. For fifteen or twenty years I have been a regular reader of the *Congressional Record*. What I now propose is that the members of the House of Representatives submit themselves to the same test that one of their laws forced upon the poor conscripts. If the ensuing report of the psychologists shows less than 50% of morons I engage myself to go to Washington at my own expense, crawl on hands and knees all the way from the New Willard Hotel to the Capitol, and there remain kneeling in contrite prayer and meditation for the space of one calendar week.

## § 2

*American Society*.—The most significant appraisal of and commentary on American society is provided by the "Social Register" of New York City. Approximately half the names appearing therein are those of stock-brokers, or the children or grandchildren of stock-brokers. In any society founded upon aristocracy such a thing would be impossible. In the Almanachs and Blue Books of aristocratic and civilized Europe one searches in vain for the name of a single man whose life has been spent between a ticker and a black-board.

## § 3

*Sound English*.—Have you ever noticed the excellent style of the state papers of the Hon. Andrew William Mellon, Secretary of the Treasury under the ineffable Harding? Harding himself writes like a country school-master—that is, ponderously, obscurely, idiotically. Many of his sentences have no meaning whatsoever; they are simply childish arrangements of "hard" words. His inaugural address was the most preposterous piece of tosh ever emitted by the head of a great nation since the days of the Emperor Sigismund—he who said "Ego sum . . . supra grammaticam." Most of the members of the Cabinet are also more or less illiterate. Their public announcements, in the main, are marked by extremely bad English, and by its invariable accompaniment, loose and feeble thinking. Any man who thinks clearly can write clearly. Both arts are brilliantly visible in the pronunciamentos of Dr. Mellon. His various expositions of the national

finance are as clear as crystal; even a newspaper editorial writer should be able to understand them. And they are couched in English that is direct, simple, dignified and eloquent.

*Nota Bene:* After I had composed the above tribute to the Pittsburgh Rothschild and had it put into type, I sent a proof to a reliable agent in Washington. His comment has just come in. I append it, to wit: "You are an utter damned fool. All of Mellon's documents are written by a young fellow named Gilbert, a bright Harvard boy. Mellon himself could no more write decent English than Charlie Schwab could."

## § 4

*The Hobgoblin.*—All the cartoonists seem to have agreed to make the Prohibitionist of their cartoons a tall, thin, long-faced, long-chinned fellow—in brief, the late Woodrow to the life. It is extremely unjust to Woodrow. True enough, he looks the Perfect Presbyterian, but it is certainly not fair to make him a Prohibitionist. As a matter of fact, he vetoed the War-Time Prohibition Act when it was first passed, and publicly advocated the exemption of light wines and beers. If he signed the Volstead Act, it was ironically or in despair; he had never supported it. Moreover, he made no effort to conceal the fact that he was not averse to an occasional personal injection of *Schnapps*. In brief, a man with a perfectly civilized view of alcoholic beverages, despite his general Puritanism. What saved him, I daresay, was his intense colonialism. Had England gone dry he might have gone over to Prohibition, but in the face of a cultural conflict between the colony and the mother country he remained laudably faithful to the superior *Kultur* of the mother country. Nevertheless, the cartoonists persist in using him as a model for their dry blue-nose. Worse, hundreds of thousands of Americans voted against his party in 1920 because they believed that he had somehow brought

on Prohibition. It is a beautiful proof of the ingratitude of republics.

## § 5

*Cinderella.*—The eternal popularity of "Cinderella" has been explained on many grounds and in many ways: that it is human nature to wish to see the abused and humble come into their own and abash those who have looked down upon them; that sympathy for one who sweetly bears indignities in silence is ever profound; that it is the desire of most persons that the meek shall inherit the earth; that—

A score of such thats.

I offer an explanation of the persistent popularity that no one, so far as I know, has yet offered; it seems to me to be, in at least one direction, not without some basis in fact. It is this: that Cinderella has about her something of the rosemary of all men's youth in that every man's first sweetheart was, like her, a poor girl.

## § 6

*Crime and Punishment.*—The science of penology, in these days, is chiefly in the hands of sentimentalists, and so it shows all the signs of the prevailing glycosuria. The idea seems to be to turn the dungeons and bull-pens of the law into laboratories of the uplift, so that the man who goes in a burglar will come out a Y. M. C. A. secretary. To this end all harsh handling of the felon is frowned upon, and on the slightest showing of nascent piety in him he is delivered from his cage, almost with apologies.

At the bottom of this softness, of course, there is a sound instinct, and that is the instinct of revolt against cruel and excessive punishments. We inherited such a system of punishments from the English common law; in the Constitution itself there is the first sign of the rebellion against them. But our current error lies in the fact that this softness has not only disposed of the punishments that were barbarous and

excessive; it has also sorely limited and conditioned the punishments that were reasonable and fitting; and so the problem of dealing effectively with crime remains a puzzle, and crime itself continues to flourish.

When I say crime, of course I mean the thing in its conventional sense. In the abstract it scarcely has any existence. Practically all so-called crimes are justifiable on occasion, and nine-tenths of them, to certain kinds of men, are unavoidable on occasion. It is a platitude that you will find quite as many intelligent and honest men in the average prison as you will find in the average club, and when it comes to courage, enterprise and determination—in brief, to the special virtues which mark the superior man—you will probably find a great many more.

But society, in order to protect the weak and botched against the bold and original, has had to proclaim certain human acts, under certain circumstances, as too dangerous to be permitted, and hence as what we call criminal. Most of us aspire to the majority of those acts in secret, and some of us commit them surreptitiously, but the man who performs them in such a manner that the fact becomes notorious is held to be a menace to the security of the rest of us, and so we go through the solemn hocus-pocus of seizing him and trying him, and pump up indignation over his rascality, and finally visit upon him the thing called punishment.

The trouble with this so-called punishment is that it is hypocritical and dishonest at bottom, and thus at constant war with justice and common sense. What we find practically is a crowd of poltroons in the jury box venting their envious hatred of enterprise and daring upon a man who, at worst, is at least as decent as they are; and a scoundrel on the bench lording it over a scoundrel in the dock because the latter is less clever than he is. In the old days this ill nature took the form of floggings, mutilations and damnations. In our own days, with an evil conscience gnawing the gizzard of the world, it takes

the shape of formalities which tend to grow more and more ineffective, sentimental and meaningless.

In particular, it takes the shape of a grotesquely circumscribed repertoire of penalties, so that the business of fitting the punishment to the crime becomes more and more difficult, even to the stray judge with intelligence. In a few rare cases he may condemn a prisoner to death; in all other cases he has a Hobson's choice between a mulcting in damages which seldom punishes at all, and a deprivation of liberty which usually punishes inappropriately, and often too much. The medieval judge had an almost unlimited series of choices; if no habitual punishment suited his purposes, he could devise a new punishment to fit the case. But the modern judge must forever oscillate absurdly between fine and imprisonment—in other words, between allowing one prisoner to pay a bribe for his liberty, and taking away the liberty of another prisoner because he hasn't got the bribe.

It is a deep consciousness of this absurdity which lies at the bottom of all the fantastic experiments of modern penology, and of many of the extravagances which we witness on the bench. It seemed ridiculous, perhaps, for Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis, LL.B., to fine the Standard Oil Company \$29,240,000, but in its essence it was an honest effort to bring an offender to something approaching scientifically exact justice. It seems (and may be) sugarishly sentimental for uplifters to transform prisons into moving-picture parlors, but underneath it there is the sound doctrine that locking up a man in a cell is, for most crimes, too harsh, and that its effect on the man is precisely the opposite of the one intended, for it makes him a more determined antagonist of so stupid and cruel a society than ever he was before.

What we need is a thorough overhauling of our punishments—an overhauling looking to their rescue from formalism and imbecility. They must be made more fluent, more intelligible, more various. We must get rid of

that mawkish and false humanity which shrinks from simple and forthright penalties, and restore that true humanity which seeks only to make the criminal stop doing what he is doing, and halts before it has made a wreck of him. If revenge is admitted (and I suppose it always will be), it must be admitted openly and unblushingly, and not swathed in that dishonest concealment which now seeks to make it appear as something else.

In medieval law, as I have hinted, there are suggestions that should engage the penological reformer of tomorrow. The medieval mind was unburdened by transcendental theories as to the nature and causes of crime. It was realistic in habit, and disdained to seek behind the palpable fact for hidden portents and significances. In particular, it disdained to conceal its workings beneath gossamers of fabulous purpose. It thus defined its crimes simply and clearly, and punished them frankly. For the runaway villain the obvious punishment was hamstringing, and, being obvious, it was executed without further ado. For the perjurer, the removal of a part of his offending tongue. For the scoundrel who bit in clinches, extraction of the incisors. For the rowdy housewife and husband-baiter, prolonged immersion in a horse-pond—that is, enforced and painful silence. For the habitual thief, branding of the forehead with a large and warning T. For the short-weight grocer, three hours in the pillory, that his victims might pay him up with his own eggs and mark him well for future avoidance.

A judge, in those naïve and far-off days, had to be a fellow of resource and ingenuity, a man capable of quick and accurate reasoning. His superiors expected him, not merely to punish crime, but to punish it in some germane and felicitous fashion. If he could get a touch of humor into his sentence, so much the better, for the common people, then as now, remembered a jocosity much longer than they remembered a syllogism. In any event he had to maintain some intelligible connection

between the offense and the penalty, that its lesson might be plain. If, finding the application of capsicum plasters to the pantaloons an efficient punishment for napping catchpolls, he next day prescribed it for a pirate, a witch or a well-poisoner, then he was himself brought into court for malfeasance, and perhaps cashiered for his idiocy. In brief, he had to keep his wits about him if he would enjoy the ermine. The law presumed him to be a man of sagacity, of ingenuity, or resource; and if, by any stupidity, he showed that he wasn't, its wrath consumed him.

The judge of today needs no such virtues. He is not the agent and exponent of justice, but its mere lackey. A great body of intricate law protects the felon against his effort to ferret out and determine the crime, and another great body of law protects the felon against his effort to fit the punishment to that crime. Consider, for example, the difficulties confronting him when he faces a very familiar task: the sentencing of a convicted pickpocket. Two or three considerations must inevitably flit through his darkened mind in this situation. One is that picking pockets requires a very high degree of manual skill—that it is an avocation as difficult technically as dentistry or playing the piano. Another, following upon the first, is that it is almost always pursued professionally—that, generally speaking, the pickpocket always devotes his whole time to it. A third is that, having thus entered the profession deliberately, and mastered its excessive difficulties, and taken over its known risks, he is firmly set in it, and cannot be shaken out by any process which leaves his actual expertness undamaged.

In other words, the pickpocket is a deliberate, habitual and incurable criminal, and neither chaining him by the leg nor forcing him to view moral moving-picture shows will ever cure him. To be bagged now and then, to make occasional sojourns in prison—all that, to him, is mere professional risk. When, by some mischance, he is taken and jailed, he lays the business to the for-

tunes of war, as a surgeon does when a patient dies or a lawyer when a client is hanged. As soon as he has paid his debt to the law he resumes the practice of his profession. If anything, a term in prison heartens and emboldens him, for he commonly debits it, not to the acts preceding it, but to the acts to follow it. In brief, he regards it as a sort of fee or license paid to the community for the privilege of extracting wallets. No one ever heard of a reformed pickpocket; he exists only in the dreams of sentimental penologists. He may give up the business when his eyes give out, or his fingers get too stiff, but so long as he can snatch a pocketbook and get away he will keep on at it. And yet, so absurd is our law that we try to cure him by making him stop temporarily—by locking him up for two or three years, or maybe for only six months! As well try to cure a poet by forbidding him, for six months, to get drunk!

But what better offers? Something enormously better. The simple device, in brief, of condemning the detected pickpocket to lose the third phalange of the index finger of his right hand—a quick, safe, wholly painless operation, almost as easy as having a boil lanced. And yet quite as certain in its effects as life imprisonment. The pickpocket is not appreciably mutilated. The loss of that one phalange does not show itself. He is fit for almost any honest work that can be imagined. But he can no more pick a pocket, with the chief of his highly trained tools gone, than a fiddler, in like case, could play a cadenza. All of his special capacity for crime is gone, and with it his special temptation is gone, too. At every other variety of felony he is as much an amateur and blunderer as the judge on the bench.

I present only this one concrete example of what might be accomplished if we could rid our criminal laws of falsehood and sentimentality, and restore them to sense. The mind of every reflective judge must be full of simple, just and effective punishments that he would inflict if he could—punishments

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enormously more apt and efficient than the fine which penalizes too little, and the imprisonment which penalizes arbitrarily, unintelligibly and too much. Why jail embezzlers? Why not put them to work as slaves of their victims, and make them work out what they have stolen? Why jail wife-beaters? Why not try to discourage them with a few strokes of the bastinado? Why jail grafters in office? Why not simply seize their stealings, strip them bare, and then forbid them the city, state and country?

Many old punishments deserve revival: ducking, whipping, transportation, branding, forfeiture of goods. They are simpler and cheaper than those we have; it is obvious that they would work better. In the Philippines we have scores of almost uninhabited islands. Why not ship our felons out there and let them learn discipline by preying on one another? Or send them to Arkansas to fight the Ku Klux Klan? It is not only a way to get rid of them, and of the heavy expense of keeping them; it is a way to civilize Arkansas and the Philippines. Criminals are like the rest of us. Given the right kind of chance, they show their sound metal. Australia was settled by criminals; so were Maryland, and part of Virginia. Who notices it, or even remembers it, today?

In the forfeiture of goods there are the same great possibilities. This punishment would be the best of all weapons against stock-waterers, trade-restrainers, war-profiteers and other such powerful recalcitrants. Personally, I am in favor of these scoundrels, but if they are criminals by law, then let us deal with them in a way that will dispose of them. The fine of \$29,240,000, even if collected, would not have hurt John D. Rockefeller. But a decree of forfeiture, taking over all his goods and making invalid any debt owed to him or any contract made with him or any security owned by him, would have converted him into a penniless Baptist clergyman overnight, and so actually brought down the price of gasoline.

Every day, by extra-legal means, our



judges try to reach out for these new and more effective penalties. The punishment provided by law for one of the commonest of police court offenses—the stupid yielding to amorous suggestion called seduction—is a complex and unworkable combination of fine by instalments and threat of imprisonment. No sane judge ever inflicts it. What he does is to make the victim marry the party of the first part. The device is just and sensible, and it works. The victim is appropriately penalized for his numskullery, and the damage that society might have suffered from it is obliterated.

This is what we need in punishments—first, a reasonable fitness and justice, and secondly, a removal of the damage or menace to social order and security. Our present system fails in both departments. It is arbitrary, unintelligent and alternately too cruel and too soft; and it wholly fails to make crime difficult and unattractive.

## § 7

*Trivial Note.*—No woman is more beautiful than her neck.

## § 8

*The Puritan.*—I pick up a copy of the estimable *Springfield Republican*, for years and years the chief organ of New England culture. It is the issue for Sunday, February 5, 1922. I turn to the Rotogravure Section. In it there are no less than 48 photographic views of pretty gals—and 27 of them show their legs above their knees!

## § 9

*Philological Note.*—The lack of a single word to indicate the scoundrels who now seek to force Prohibition upon the American people reveals a linguistic poverty that is rather rare in America. As a rule, we make new words the instant the need arises, and often they are very picturesque. For example, *steam-roller*, *trust-buster*, *uplifter*, *smut-hound*, *stand-patter* and *joy-rider*. But

the newspapers still use the clumsy *Prohibition enforcement officer* to designate the latest model of grafter and extortionist. The term is fit only for lawyers and other such pedants. In place of it I suggest *booze-terrier*, from *booze* (= Du. *buizen*, to drink to excess = L.G. *busen* = H.G. *bausen*) and *terrier* (= L. *terrarius*, a mammal employing the snout in combat). The compound is a Latin-Germanic bastard, but so are some of our most respectable words, e. g., *rat-terrier*. It has analogues in *booze-hister*, *booze-fighter* and *booze-party*, the latter a bastard of exactly the same sort. If it is rejected by the faculty, then I propose *booze-snouter*. Here we have a perfectly legitimate compound, for *snout* is from the ME. *snute*, and has cognates in the Du. *snuit*, the Ger. *schnauze*, the Dan. *snude*, and the Sw. and Norw. *snut*. There is something subtly opprobrious about the word *snout*, used in speaking of one made in God's image. Yet it is the snout that the Prohibition blackmailers employ in their work, just as the vice-crusaders employ it. Cut off their snouts, legally or anatomically, and they would be as sadly crippled as diplomats robbed of their spats.

## § 10

*Fragment on War.*—The doctrine that war is a sort of discreditable madness, a disease with overtones of immorality, say like lues or delirium tremens—that civilized man, when he takes to arms, slips into a state that is at once pathological and criminal—this doctrine, now greatly prospered in the world, is of a piece with all the other feeble denials of reality that the *Skavennorm* has foisted upon human reason. One hears it of late, not only from Quakers, Socialists and other such apotheosists of timorousness, but also from men born of proud, heroic and puissant stocks; it marks, perhaps, the extreme achievement of that conspiracy against all the primal instincts which lies at the center of Christian ethics, and particularly of Protestant ethics. Even



more than those abominable evasions which pollute the most unescapable phenomena of sex with a furtive and revolting indecency, it reveals its sources in the terrors and self-distrusts of fifth-rate men. What one finds in it, stripping it of cant, is no more than fear, and, with that fear, a profound hatred of those who are bare of it. The warrior is not afraid; he delights in hazards; he embraces the extraordinary, the inordinate, the impossible; above all, he is not squeamish—the horrible does not dismay him. *Ergo*, there is something the matter with him; he is not "normal." *Ergo*, he is not to be trusted; he is "immoral."

What we have here, of course, is simply a definition of "normality" that starts off by repudiating all the known facts of history, anthropology and psychology, and even some of those of physiology—a definition framed, it would seem, for the special comfort of green-grocers, clod-hoppers and the generality of the "saved," all of whom stand outside the first concern of these sciences, as ciphers stand outside the first concern of mathematics. Applying the definition experimentally, one comes to the conclusion that it is "normal" to swallow patent medicines, to admire moving-picture actors, to believe in ghosts and to belong to the Junior Order of United American Mechanics.

The error, of course, lies in confusing "normal" and "usual"; in exactly the same way it is "normal," in a lunatic asylum, to believe that one is an angel, and, in a Methodist church, that one will become one *post mortem*. But these grotesque projections of normalcy, it must be plain, are no more than indications of the inferior and stupid man's inability to apprehend reality save in terms of his own ego—his own secret notion, by fear out of envy, of what would be lovely. Here, to be sure, he shares a weakness with all other men, save perhaps a small minority, for the capacity to escape from egoistic promptings, even as a transient feat of intellectual virtuosity, is very rare. But in him one may safely put this capacity out

of consideration, even theoretically; he lacks it altogether. What he actually has in mind when he speaks of the "normal," the "healthful," the "virtuous," and so on, is merely what is normal and healthful and virtuous to men of his own sort, and to them alone—that is to say, to the endless herd of undistinguished and almost undifferentiated men, the zeros and blank cartridges of the race—to the end-products, flaccid and spineless, of thousands of years of subordination, of "order," of haunting fears, of eager and apologetic conformity—and, above all, of oblique and fluttering efforts, fatal to all clean thinking, to trick out that fear with moral names, to make that "order" appear voluntary and even altruistic, and to give a false and anesthetic dignity to that subordination and conformity.

In brief, the doctrine that war represents a diseased state of society is the natural invention of men to whom it actually *does* represent a diseased state, *i. e.*, a state deleterious to their happiness. They are unequal to it, of their own motion, as they are unequal to any other enterprise, social or personal, which demands originality, initiative, foresight and, most of all, courage. They are unequal to the deliberate and far-seeing preparations, the machiavellian *concealments* of preparation, which alone make it possible among huge states; they are devoid of the complex and innumerable talents, often highly specialized, that are necessary to its conduct; they are even incapable of pumping up their own emotions to the pitch needed to transform their native shrinking into enthusiasm—the business has to be undertaken by professional mob-masters, familiar with all the processes of mob psychology, as was witnessed on the entrance of the United States into the late war, and, somewhat previously, when France began to weaken and it became necessary for England to support her on land as well as on the sea. For these things the great masses of mankind have no gift. They are not only unable to initiate war, and to carry it on effectively; they are

almost unable to imagine it; all their thinking is in terms, not of defiance, but of law; not of enterprise, but of security. It is only the otiose day-dream of peace that permits them to dally comfortably with the most cherished of their delusions, to wit, the delusion of their dignity and importance, of their inalienable freedom, of their equality before the Lord. Once the bugles blow, this chimera vanishes, and they face, in hideous nakedness, the realities hitherto swathed in lyrical and glittering words. Hereafter they must yield the neck, not only in fact but also in name. Hereafter the liberty of the sovereign citizen, made in God's image, is something that they must not even talk of. . . .

But to argue that what is thus true of the masses of men is true of *all* men, or, indeed, of any respectable party of them, considering values rather than mere numbers—to do this is simply to succumb to one of the fundamental fallacies of democracy. The noise of the mob is deafening; it is almost impossible to hear the still, small voice of the minority—but that still, small voice is sounding none the less, and the cause it pleads for is not only the cause of every honest thought, of every honorable ideal, of every brave challenge, but also the cause of every profound and forthright instinct, of every free and *innocent* reaction of the organism to the forces which press upon it in the world, thus troubling its equilibrium and making for its evolution. The static and undistinguished majority is made up of the countless thousands who are *afraid* of these instincts—who stand trembling before the temptation within as before the menace without—whose glory it is to renounce, to be “moral.” The dynamic and distinguished minority is made up of those who accept all instincts as they accept all other facts—who discern in them the most powerful of stimulants, not only to deeds, but also to thoughts, to aspirations, to penetrating solutions—whose glory it is to face the dangers in them unshrinkingly, steadily, even a bit proudly.

It is the vanity of the inferior man to be as much like his fellows as possible, to avoid all offense to them, to escape their envy—in brief, to bear their obliterating stamp. It is the vanity of the superior man to be as much *unlike* them as possible, to challenge them, to shame them, to go boldly where they are afraid to venture, to *excite* their envy—in brief, to be *himself* in every atom. And to be himself, wholly and unreservedly, he must not only rid himself of those hollow formulæ which make up what passes as mob thinking; he must also rid himself of that pervasive distrust of natural impulses, that terror of the innocent and vigorous mammal, that disabling fear of the instinctive and the unaccountable, which is the mother of all mob emotion. Farthest from the brute in his aspirations, in his habitual engrossments, in the whole rise and sweep of his ideas, he is yet nearest to the brute in his free movement in the cosmic stream, in his essential autonomy as an individual.

Once these facts are grasped, one has an explanation of the general theory, cherished by the lower orders of men in all ages, that their superiors are beneath them in rectitude—that aristocrats of whatever sort, whether intellectual, military, political or merely economic, are “immoral.”

This theory, of course, is full of half-truths and even of downright falsehoods: if it were absolutely true, it is scarcely probable that the lower orders of men would embrace it. In so far as it depicts the superior man as merely dissolute it is wholly absurd. He is surrounded, in point of fact, by restraints even more rigid than those which afflict his inferiors; *his* welfare, particularly in relation to other men of his own order, also calls for renunciations; he must know how to maintain himself as a unit in an organization that is larger than he is, and that sometimes has antagonistic interests. These restraints and renunciations are determined by what is commonly called his code of honor—that is, by his special class-morality. It may be, as I say, very

rigid, especially when the whole order of aristocrats is under attack from below and hard pressed to defend its differentiation. It may even, on occasion, command voluntary death as a sacrifice to the common *amour propre*—a sacrifice seldom demanded by the morality of the lower orders.

But in his relations, not to his own kind, but to the varieties of men beneath him, it is obviously justifiable to say that the aristocrat is immoral—that is, if one accepts, as sound for the purpose, the definition of morality prevailing below. He has, in fact, only the most defective respect for all those theoretical rights which mob morality presumes to defend; whenever such rights conflict with what he conceives to be his own rights, or even with his unlegalized impulses, he is very apt to put the latter first. Thus, he does not respect the inviolability of the mob man's wife, he does not respect the mob man's property, and, above all, he does not respect all those dubious assumptions which lie at the bottom of the mob man's dignity as a citizen.

The chief popular objection to the superior man, when he appears in the rôle of artist, is that he is very apt to be an adulterer, or, at all events, a poor family man; the notion of his immorality has transferred itself to the arts themselves, and they are regarded as somehow indecent and discreditable. Here, of course, the distrust of beauty *per se*, as a distraction from duty, an agent of sensuality, also enters into the matter: beauty is the supreme temptress, and only to be laid by deliberately em-

bracing ugliness—in the popular speech, by avoiding what is "fancy." (A prostitute is a "fancy woman.") But above this suspicion of beauty in itself, there is the suspicion of the arts as useless, and of the artist as voluptuous. Similarly, the objection to the superior man in his incarnation as capitalist is that his accumulations represent violations of other men's rights—that he devotes himself too ardently to playing upon their weaknesses, their stupidities, their dire necessities, and gives too little heed to their theoretical deserts—that he brings the too realistic morality of the wolf-pack into his traffic with beings who have immortal souls, and are beloved of God, and stand secured against hell by the sacrifice of His Son. Finally, the objection to the superior man as politician, as ruler, is that he is, on the one hand, lacking in respect for the liberties of the masses, and, on the other hand, too prone to put his own private profit and inclination above the profit and inclination of the populace—in brief, that he is despotic, and hence, by democratic morality, immoral. It may be said at once that, whatever the precise form of the complaint, the case is usually made out. That Richard Wagner, from the standpoint of an ordinary householder, was an immoral man is indubitable. That Jay Gould, from the standpoint of a petty tradesman, was even more immoral is equally plain. And that Otto von Bismarck, seen through the eyes of a Socialist, was guilty of immoralities innumerable and doubly damned—this surely needs no argument. . . .



## Finale

*By Malory Fere*

FROM the black sky great orange flames shot down upon the earth; trees burst into fire and were lost in thick clouds of blue smoke; houses crumbled into ruins and were ashes that the wind blew headlong across the world into the nothingness of space. The waters of the sea sank into the ground and huge fissures rent the earth asunder. Now and then a long tongue of

fire, changing colors incessantly—blue, red, yellow, green, orange—and then impenetrable masses of dense smoke.

The last man in the world, stationed on a high peak at the end of the earth, surveyed the scene in sombre silence. He was thinking: After all, the whole thing was very unnecessary, was it not?

Shrugging his shoulders, he plunged into the abyss. . . .



## Enchantment

*By A. Newberry Choyce*

SINCE my love is lovely both near and very far  
With beauty by the dark and beauty by the dawn,  
I will wall her now a garden where lily blossoms are  
And plant her soft green grasses to be a shining lawn.

So when the day is weary, about the moon-hour,  
And a lone reluctant throstle leaves his minstrelsy,  
This lady shall proceed like a pale proud flower  
While the red roses smoulder dully on a tree

And haply a stranger passing by my door  
Shall remain in the moon with a sweet wild doubt,  
And marvel if any has ever seen before  
Lilies in my garden moving all about.



# The Sins of the Father . . .

*By Richmond Brooks Barrett*

## I

**G**LORIA WILSON always looked back on her first week at boarding-school as the most tragic period of her career. It was then that her spirit had been broken. She had arrived from the Middle West and straightway had been accepted by everyone at Miss Nowell's estimable cultural institution as "the sweetest, most refined girl in the school."

Gloria had been frightened from the start by the ecstatic cordiality of her classmates. Hers was an intensely sensitive nature; she had suffered agonies in her native town at the hideous distinction of being old Thomas Wilson's only child. The smoke from the chimneys of his very busy factories had seemed to cast a gloom over her ever since she had been old enough to realize the stark, practical, unlovely nature of the wares that brought so much prosperity.

It had somehow been less painful, however, to be in a place where the truth was known. To be sure, Gloria had been unhappy enough, but there had never been any chance out there to conceal the actual facts. Indeed, the inhabitants of Emporia weren't the sort to see any reason for shame in an industry that made its owner the biggest power in the town. Gloria was looked up to as Thomas Wilson's daughter. Her sense of pollution came from an innate delicacy; it was not induced by the attitude of the world at large. Poor Gloria was put upon the earth with the unfortunate asset of a poetic craving after beauty in all its manifestations. A

boisterous sense of humor, an ebullient relish for the grotesque and indecent—these qualities had been denied her.

At Miss Nowell's, Gloria went about from the beginning with a feeling of downright perfidy. She had a secret that couldn't fail to shock her associates. She cried herself to sleep at night; in the morning her swollen eyes moved the other girls to gushing pity. She was homesick—that was the affectionate verdict. Homesick! The word would evoke a vision of the Wilson factories. The worst ignominy of all for the miserable Gloria was the fact that Miss Nowell's polite establishment used, in the daily round, a substantial amount of the commodity that had brought Mr. Wilson his fame. This constant, intolerable reminder of her plight was relentlessly fraying Gloria's sensitive nerves.

Then, on the first Saturday night of her school life, the dreaded crisis had come. A half-dozen of the girls, in their negligées, had gathered in Hester Concklin's room for the purpose of nibbling some chocolate that had arrived that morning from Mrs. Concklin. It was an attractive scene—the sort of occasion that had always filled Gloria's soul with artistic satisfaction. It was all so refined and delicately modish—like a pale water-color or a *Vanity Fair* cover.

Hester Concklin, who had the reputation of being the worst snob in the school, and who did her clumsy best to live up to the distinction, had suddenly remarked, after a lull in the conversation:

"Let's talk about what our father's

do. Mine's a banker—Gregory C. Concklin, of Chester and Concklin."

She beamed at having spoken so deftly in character. That her interest in the topic faded out with the delivery of her own news was obvious, for Miss Hester, helping herself to a piece of candy, had at once strayed to the nearest mirror and, closing one eye, had begun to appraise with the other the length of the eyelashes lying along her cheek.

The other girls, however, were determined that the discussion should continue. Little Millie James, "the most modest person in the school," laughed apologetically by way of warning her companions that her words might sound conceited.

"My father," she murmured, "my father is on the Supreme Court Bench. Isn't it queer, girls? A silly thing like me to have such a wonderful father—"

Nobody deigned to answer the shy Millie. Gwendolyn Tompkins and Faith Grey rushed in with their paternal claims at the same moment, their voices mingling in a shrill competition.

"My father's a novelist. He's—oh, he's terribly frank. I'm not allowed to read his books until I'm a married woman," piped Gwendolyn.

"My father is a Senator in Congress—he's got a *marvelous* mind," came Faith's high opposing treble.

Gloria had sat quite still during the vivacious battle for supremacy. She was pale and her heart thudded. She had never before had such a sick, panicky feeling of being driven into a corner. What should she say when her turn came? What *could* she say? Of course she must lie. Her seething brain snatched at one possibility after another.

Suddenly she became aware of a complete stillness in the room. Her friends' eyes were all focused eagerly on her.

Hester Concklin, sensing in her rôle of professional snob that Gloria was frightened at recent developments, took a sudden new interest in the discussion.

"What about *your* father, darling?" she pressed.

Gloria attempted a matter-of-fact smile.

"Oh, he's a manufacturer," she announced.

Then, in absolute desperation, she tried to think up some not too obvious way of giving the conversation a veer. She was unable, however, to manage the transition. Her lower lip was trembling convulsively.

"And *what* does he manufacture, dear?" Hester was gentle but relentless.

"He—manufactures—paper goods," faltered Gloria.

"Stationery?" came back the dogged Miss Concklin.

Gloria did her frenzied best to achieve an affirmative nod, but at that perilous moment her emotion conquered her. In utter agony, she buried her face in her slender hands and burst into sobs.

"I—I don't care!" she gasped, to the amazement of her companions. "I *am* refined; I *am* nice. But you'll all hate me now—you'll all hate me!"

Still hiding her stricken face, she sprang to her feet and rushed out of the room.

## II

It was unfortunately true that the attitude of Miss Nowell's pupils underwent a decided shift. The girls were genuinely sorry for Gloria in her tragicomic plight. They kept telling one another that it wasn't her fault. They tried to overlook the blot on the Wilson escutcheon and to treat her with cordiality. It just couldn't be done, however. Gloria's passionate outburst on that critical Saturday night had left her friends in a temporary bewilderment; but the young things had brains of a sort in their heads and it didn't take them long to arrive at the actual truth.

"Oh, my dears!" little Milly James summed it up. "We can never be nice to her again. Such girls *can't* be what they seem."

Be it said to the credit of Miss Nowell's charges that, even now, they refrained from turning their backs squarely on the pariah in their midst.



Gloria, however, intensely sensitive creature that she was, recognized the new note of hysteria in her associates' endearments. Her presence made all the girls unhappy; she cast a gloom over every gathering in which she was politely included.

Little by little, too, the arrogance of youth stirred in her erstwhile friends' bosoms. They began to feel that they had been imposed on and cheated. Pity waned; indignation waxed. Miss Concklin in the end saw a priceless opportunity—an opportunity she had shut her eyes to for a while—of displaying her famous and justifiable snobbery. So she made up for lost time. She addressed Gloria in sentences of terse hauteur; she used her eyebrows to convey eloquent comments on the gulf between a banker's child and the daughter of a Rabelaisian potentate.

Gloria's career at Miss Nowell's came to its dreary conclusion just five weeks after the commencement of the school term. She wired her mother that she was returning to Emporia, and slipped away from the aristocratic house in Fifty-fourth Street without bidding any of the girls good-bye. It was no wonder that her fragile spirit was broken. It seemed to her that she would be quite incapable now of ever holding up her head to deal bravely with life. She thought of suicide. The discovery of her mangled body on the tracks might teach Miss Nowell's intolerant pupils that a girl could be Thomas Wilson's child and still be possessed of refinement and nobility. Poor Gloria, however, was too much stricken to have the courage for a supreme defiance. As the train drew near the Emporia station and the Wilson chimneys belched their smoky welcome, Gloria merely shut her eyes and let the big tears fall unhindered. Yes, her spirit was broken.

### III

GLORIA had always dreaded the idea of falling in love. She looked with fear on every man she met. Of course, to her love would mean merely suffering

and bitter renunciation. A true kindred spirit could never survive the shock of the inevitable discovery of her connection with the Emporia factories.

Gloria felt that her father's business would in the end send her into a decline, with an untimely grave to bring her peace at last. A nature like her own—the only sort of nature that could ever stir her heart to amorous beating—must needs succumb to the truth as hers was succumbing. So she had determined to rule love out of her life. If by some strange mischance life's crowning experience should touch her, she had resolved never, never to confess her state to the man who had occasioned it. She would feign coldness; she would renounce him. To Gloria there was some satisfaction in the perception that, though no one would ever understand, it might be her privilege to enact the rôle of a true heroine in the big dramatic climax of her career.

She remained for a year in Emporia; then her courage to endure came to a sudden end. Thomas Wilson, ever eager to keep up with the times in his business, had called together a half-dozen of New York's most celebrated illustrators for the purpose of devising a brilliant advertisement for a new product with which the old man was planning to dazzle the civilized world. For months poor Gloria was forced to listen while her energetic parents consulted on the merits of this latest Wilson bid for fame; it was a torture to the sensitive girl, the ebullient pride of her mother and father in their manufactures. They talked shop from morning till night.

As the plans for the lavish entertainment of the New York artists matured, Gloria grew daily more unhappy. It seemed to her little short of desecration that these successful men, whose work decorated the covers of the smartest magazines and whose skill in painting the best type of American girl had given her a feeling of reverence for art, should lend their names and their prestige to this plan of Thomas Wilson's. Humanity began to appear to Gloria in

a new and by no means attractive light.

"*Arabian Nights Brand*"—that had been the title chosen for the much-discussed commodity. The advertisement was to be a splendid and exotic thing; the artists would be stimulated to give of their best. Of course a harem scene was inevitable—a Sultan in magnificent robes, surrounded by his favorite wives. The story was to be told in two pictures. On the left, the potentate, bored and irritable, receives the homage and inspects the wares of the merchants from the bazaars, but finds nothing of interest in the gorgeous display. On the right—ah, on the right!—a fresh and blooming girl, whose nationality is pointed by her costume of red, white and blue, kneels by the throne, holding up on a salver a package on which are printed plainly the words: "*Common Sense Products, Emporia; Thomas Wilson, President.*" The Sultan's expression has changed to a mingled awe and delight as, bending forward, he examines the damsel's offering, meanwhile ignoring, in lofty dignity, the jealous lightnings that dart from the eyes of the merchants and the discomfited wives.

It was really no wonder, Mr. and Mrs. Wilson felt, that the men from New York had been unable to resist joining forces in so attractive an enterprise. Their completed work was to be used, not only for an ordinary advertisement, but for an "Art Calendar, suitable for framing, printed in five colors on heavy paper, to be sent to any home in the United States on receipt of ten cents in stamps."

Gloria stood the ignominy of the thing through the months of jubilant preparation; but, ten days before the arrival of the famous illustrators in Emporia, she realized that she had come to the end of her resources. She therefore put the matter before her astonished father as tactfully as she could, making no secret, however, of the fact that the ordeal of the actual entertainments projected would kill her.

She must get away—that was the long and short of it; she must return to New York, in order to study music and

to forget. The old people thought her insane, but, loving her as they did, they let her have her hysterical way. Gloria left Emporia for the eastern metropolis a week before the artists showed up in their private car. Thomas Wilson, generous soul that he was, gave her a big cheque and his paternal blessing.

So there began a new chapter in the girl's career. She took an attractive apartment and worked hard over her piano lessons. Gradually the clouds lifted and she achieved a certain contentment. She was no longer the daughter of Thomas Wilson; she was just Miss Wilson, an indefatigable student of music, a woman of refinement whom people respected.

Those first months in New York held but one galling and humiliating experience. A good-looking, jolly young man named Thompson had become interested in her. They were the best of friends, going together frequently to concerts and the theatre. Thompson was at times rather crude and boisterous, but Gloria's nature had such delicacy that she had soon softened his roughness to a marked degree. There had been nothing in their discreet intimacy to prepare her for the shock of that terrible evening when the young man had without warning overstepped the mark she had so rigidly set. He had come to her apartment to take her to a concert. Gloria had as usual held out her hand to him with sweet cordiality. Thompson, bursting into a coarse laugh, had chuckled her archly under the chin and roared out something most unbecoming about her being "a sly little minx." Gloria, stricken to the heart, had recoiled, her eyes wide and uncomprehending.

"How dare you, Mr. Thompson?" she had cried. "What does this mean, may I ask?"

"Old Tom Wilson's daughter, eh?" he had returned with a delighted chuckle. "Good Lord, what a sell on a fellow!"

So he had learned the truth! The mere fact of her father's business had altered his attitude toward her and made

him confident that she would submit to any indignity from any man.

Gloria's heart sank; the horror of her position had never before been so brutally pointed. She did not, however, lose her dignity. She stood there in front of Thompson and told him quite simply that everything was over between them. She had, of course, realized from the start that he was unworthy of her, but she had been fool enough to believe her influence might help him. And *this* was the return he made!

Her words were calm and full of an implacable scorn. The man quailed before her. When at last she dismissed him with the command never to come again to her apartment, poor Thompson was pitifully contrite. He stammered out something of his remorse and begged her to give him another chance; but Gloria had shaken her head with decision and murmured:

"I am through with you—forever."

#### IV

THEN love had come to Gloria. She had never believed it possible that the natures of any two people could so resemble each other as did hers and Geoffrey Little's. His innate refinement and delicacy of spirit precisely matched hers. His enthusiasms—Mendelssohn and Chaminade, Archibald Marshall and Leonard Merrick, Maxfield Parrish, Galli-Curci and John McCormack—these also were Gloria's enthusiasms. Little was tall, slender and obviously sensitive. The girl knew from the start that the friendship—for friendship it *must* remain—spelled tragedy for her. Renunciation! Her former staunch resolves came back to her and tortured her; but never for a moment did she think of becoming false to her better nature. At times, as she looked into the man's fine candid eyes, that rested on her with reverent respect, Gloria was able only with a supreme effort to keep herself from returning a mute answering signal of surrender.

Once he had asked shyly:

"Gloria, if you ever fell in love with a man, would anything else matter?

Would he be enough in himself?"

After this rather cryptic query, he had examined her in anxious tenderness while he waited for her reply.

"I shall never marry—now," she had murmured, striving hard to conceal the passionate regret of her words. "It—it is simply out of the question."

Little had frowned out his perplexity, then sighed his patent discouragement.

"Still," he resumed at length, "if you *did* fall in love—what then?"

"I have a very strong will," she had replied proudly. "I can keep myself from ever falling in love."

"I wish to God I could say as much for myself." Little's voice had a decided bitterness. After a moody pause he went on:

"A girl like you, Gloria, shouldn't prevent herself from caring for the right man. You could make the chap so wonderfully happy, you know."

She shook her head with decision.

"I shan't marry—ever," she persisted. "Don't ask me *why*, Geoffrey." A terror had crept into her tone and she blushed faintly. "I couldn't—explain—my reasons."

It was queer, but at that moment a dark flush rushed to her companion's cheeks and he hung his head. Gloria watched him and all at once her heart began to race at a sickening speed. Why had he grown confused and embarrassed at her words? What did it mean? Could it be that he, too, knew the truth about her father? Surely that must be it!

Gloria's love for the man had never before possessed her so absolutely. The exquisite reticence of his attitude, his care to protect her from suspecting his possession of the truth and yet, for all his tact, the ultimate confession, in that swift blush, of the delicacy of his nature—these things proved at once to Gloria that here was the man who, but for the trick of destiny, would have been her mate. He loved her; he was generously implying that love alone mattered. The girl, however, could grind happiness under her heel now with a superb courage. His blush was the symbol of the

tortures the future would hold for him in the rôle of husband to Thomas Wilson's daughter.

So Gloria had said with sweet gravity, "I'm glad of one thing, Geoffrey—that you and I have never been in danger of falling in love with each other. It's funny, isn't it, but we've been just friends from the start. We have passed the test. When a man and woman have been intimate for months and there's been no glimmer of sentiment between them, they're on a solid basis of comradeship."

Little had bowed his head to the firm edict and muttered: "I understand—oh, I understand, Gloria."

For a brief period the girl had been buoyed up by the nobility of her sacrifice to a certain exaltation. Unfortunately, however, neither she nor Geoffrey was able to conceal a vague shyness and self-consciousness in their future meetings. If their eyes met during a pause, a quick suffusion of color in their cheeks would result. The old charming frankness was gone; they found themselves forced to chatter at a headlong rate on any random topic that offered itself. Anything to guard themselves from those painfully revealing silences!

It was only gradually, however, that Gloria came to realize the steady falling off of Little's visits to her. Instead of meeting every other night, the two were soon seeing each other twice a week at most. And the man's attitude had undergone a decided veer. Of course, being a true gentleman, he continued courteous and deferential; but beneath his surface chivalry he was at present a palpably uncomfortable person. All true spontaneity had departed from the friendship of Gloria and Geoffrey Little.

The girl, delicately discerning as she was, had herself steeled for the ultimate scene of the man's defection long before the painful moment arrived. She was therefore calm and sympathetic on that dreaded evening that witnessed the full heroism of her renunciation.

Geoffrey, confused, unsteady, miser-

able, had come to her and told her that he was leaving New York for good in threedays. Gloria accepted the inevitable.

"If we ever meet again, Geoffrey," she had said, "we shall still be the best of friends."

That was all. She had played her heroic rôle to perfection. The realization of this, however, no longer brought her any exaltation. When the man had left the apartment, she crumpled up on the divan and gave way to her hysterical grief. She was ill for two days and utterly incapable of rousing herself to shake off the crushing weight of despair and disillusion.

## V

THEN, on the third morning after the parting, Little had crept, haggard and worn, up to Gloria's rooms. The girl had dragged herself out of bed that day with a discouraged idea of turning her back on the past and beginning to work afresh on her music. Her first sensation, as she held out her hand to Geoffrey, was one of gladness that he was seeing her in her new-born mood of courage rather than as the crushed victim she had been those last two harrowing days.

"Oh, Geoffrey," she murmured, "why, *why* have you come back?" Her words conveyed a gentle rebuke. "We should have let things rest as they were—"

"Gloria!" His tone was a passionate pleading. "I couldn't go away without telling you once more of my love. I—oh, I know I'm a *fool* to have any hope!—I thought you might relent, might care enough to forget—"

She closed her eyes wearily, but her voice was firm.

"I took my decision because I knew it would be best for us both—in the end," she whispered.

"But you look so unhappy, so tired and *wretched*," he went on doggedly. "Gloria, if you love me, wouldn't it be possible for you to take me for myself and forget I'm John W. Little's son?"

Suddenly Glory swayed and uttered a harsh cry. Geoffrey, catching her

around the waist, kept her from falling heavily to the floor.

"Forgive me, forgive me!" he muttered. "I was a brute to come out with the truth—I didn't *know* what I was saying. Here we've both been trying for weeks not to mention it and now I go and spoil everything. Oh, my God, if by speaking that name I've wounded you—" His voice broke.

Gloria's eyes were open now and she was watching the man with a fierce intensity.

"Geoffrey!" she commanded. "I want you to tell me again the name of your father."

He drew her to him with a swift terror; it was obvious that he feared at this moment for her reason.

"Gloria—be *calm*, my darling," he begged.

"Tell me his name!" She was strident, impatient.

"John W. Little," he faltered, his face darkly red.

All at once Gloria burst into a nervous, helpless laugh.

"Oh, Geoffrey, Geoffrey!" she cried, and hid her face shyly on his shoulder. They were silent, while he stroked her hair and murmured soothing words.

At last Gloria raised her head and, bravely meeting his anguished gaze, announced:

"I have heard my father speak so often of John W. Little—and with the greatest respect."

"It—it must have been some other John W. Little. It couldn't have been *my* father," Geoffrey warned her miserably.

But Gloria knew better. This man who had ever called forth Thomas Wilson's admiration and reverence boasted the title of "the porcelain king." His famous wares had their place in every self-respecting household, and always in close proximity to the products of the Wilson factories. Gloria closed her eyes to a vision of tiled floors, upon which rested gleaming tubs and basins and upon which also were rivetted the pompous, pure white porcelain articles that had brought John W. Little his

abiding celebrity. Like full-throated, headless marble swans with furled wings, the Little fixtures lorded it proudly over those rooms that have been the peculiar glory of the modern American home. What Praxiteles and his fellow sculptors were to Greece, that was John W. Little to twentieth-century America. Somehow to Gloria at this critical moment the image of the chastely shining wares seemed to bathe in a pure radiance, to cleanse, nay, to *justify* the labors of her father in the field that she herself had so abhorred.

"Geoffrey," the girl murmured bashfully, "I—I love you. I will marry you."

"No!" Little thundered. "You are doing this from motives of pity. I *won't* let your charity ruin your life."

Gently she put a hand to his mouth.

"Hush, my darling," she said. "You haven't heard all—yet. I am the daughter of Thomas Wilson."

For a time Little was stunned and still. Then an inarticulate cry burst from his lips and, crushing the girl to him, he kissed her mouth, her eyes, her hair, all the while stammering out his adoration, his reverence, his joy.

"But—" Abruptly he released her. "But you don't realize it all, my Gloria. My father has *commanded* me to give up everything else and to enter the business. He is getting old and wants to break me in to things—"

Gloria's smile was one of understanding and sweet sacrifice.

"You must obey him, dear," she said. "We must remember, you and I, that in this work you will be doing an inestimable service to the world. We have been harsh and selfish in our judgments of our fathers. Now we must make what amends we can."

Geoffrey was smiling as he ran his hands through her hair. His sense of delicacy, however, prevented him from voicing the quaint question that had darted into his brain.

"What damnable kind of things, I wonder, will our sons manufacture when they grow up?"

That had been his thought.



# The Higher Criticism

By James Gray

THEY sat beside me at the concert and I couldn't help hear.  
Besides, I am so interested in people.

One expensively decorated lady said to another:

"Of course, Heifetz lacks a certain something which Kreisler has, and yet he has a certain something which Kreisler lacks."

And the other, to clinch the fine point of criticism, added:

"Yes, a certain *innate* something."



IN addition to Affinities, we need the word Infinities: Persons who, when they meet each other once, never want to see each other again for all infinity.



THE gushing tears of happiness represent man's first emotion; the hysterical laughter of sorrow, his last.



A MAN errs not in having too many irons in the fire, but in having too small a bellows.





# The Six Greatest Moments

By Marian Spitzer

I  
“THE Six Greatest Moments in a Girl’s Life.” That panel, most popular, not long since, of all Harrison Fisher’s creations, framed in white and surmounted by fat pink cupids, held the place of honor over Teddy Baer’s ivory enameled bed. Its tender message was woven closely into Teddy’s girlhood dreams.

When Teddy’s parents first bestowed upon their infant daughter the rather confectionery title of Thérèse, with an accent over both e’s, they were not in a position to know that in less than a decade their darling would be of a name with the most popular toy in America. They called the child Thérèse, with an accent over both e’s, because they thought it looked nicer than Tressa, the more utilitarian name of Mr. Baer’s mother, recently dead.

But by the time Thérèse had reached the age of seven, and was a star performer in Professor Al. Neugarten’s dancing school carnivals, the diminutive had taken on a tremendous advertising value, and Teddy was a grand success, Mrs. Baer’s friends, who had no daughters of their own, said, when she gave her imitation of Anna Held singing, “I’ve Lost My Teddy Bear.”

Teddy was the youngest of the three Baers. Julius, the oldest of the trio, at this time called Juley, later to be known as Jules, was a moderately noisy boy of twelve, with light brown wavy hair, on which he was already spending much time and attention in an effort to make it grow straight. Juley had been going to Camp Weiskopf-in-the-Cat-skills every summer for five years, and

was very self-reliant, his mother said. Hortense, who was nine and a half, was a Marks all over, just like her mother’s family. She had very pretty brown curls and took great pride in the size of her hair ribbons, which were always a quarter of a yard longer than those worn by her schoolmates.

Mrs. Baer was like that. She always dressed the girls in white, with pink and blue slips and sashes. Of course it did run up the wash bill, but what use is it for a man to make good money if he can’t dress his children a little better than other children? Mrs. Baer came from one of the best German-Jewish families in New York, and so did her husband, and it was up to them to show the Jew haters that only a certain class of Jews was objectionable.

“You really can’t blame them sometimes,” Mrs. Baer would often say to her husband, as they exchanged gossip of the day over the dinner table. “I hate to admit it, but you can’t always blame them. I wish all those kikes would go back to Palestine where they belong. They’re the ones who make it hard for real refined Jews.”

And Morris Baer would nod his large, dark head in emphatic agreement. He was not a very big man, just a hair’s breadth taller than his wife—a red faced person with protuberant eyes of a nondescript color, thin, loose lips and a neck that spilled out over his collar. Mr. Baer was a highly successful real estate operator, and although he wore the customary ruby flanked diamond on the little finger of his left hand, was really quite intellectual. He read the *Times* every morning.

"Don't I know," he would reply. "Don't I come in contact with those uncouth builders and contractors every day? It makes me sore to think that genteel people like us have to suffer because a gang of ignoramuses can't stay in Hester Street where they came from."

The Baers at this time lived in a brownstone house of the Ulysses S. Grant period, in 118th Street, near Seventh Avenue, which was a fine, substantial neighborhood, occupied almost entirely by families like the Baers. Teddy and Hortense shared a big room on the top floor, all done in pink and bird's-eye-maple, and adorned with many Harrison Fisher's, of which "The Six Greatest Moments in a Girl's Life" was Teddy's favorite.

By the time she was ready to enter high school Teddy had put herself into the place of the girl in the panel every night for two years. She particularly admired the third of the series, "The Wedding," and she often wondered which one of the boys in her Sunday-school class she would some day marry. Of course, she decided, it could never be exactly like the picture, because the man and the girl in the picture were kneeling, and you didn't kneel at Jewish weddings, no matter how reformed you were. But as for the rest of the series, they were quite perfect. Teddy could fit her plump, dark self in the place of the fair slim beauty in the frame. As for the hero of the pictures, he would do until her own particular hero, about whom she was still quite hazy, came along.

That first one, where they are sitting on the deck of a steamer, and he is proposing, well, maybe that would happen when she went to Europe after her eighteenth birthday. Eighteen, she reflected, was about the right time to get engaged. Not too old and not too young.

Then the one with all the girls looking at the trousseau—she was sure to have a better one than any of her friends, mamma would see to that.

Then the favorite, the wedding one. She could wear one of those Russian

crown effect veils, to make her look tall. And she would have six bridesmaids, and Hortense could be her matron of honor, because, of course, Hortense would be married herself long before that.

Number four, "Alone at Last," or something like that, shows them together in the honeymoon car, and Teddy always got a shivery feeling when she thought about that, and passed over it rather hurriedly.

The fifth one, "The First Evening in Their Own Home," with both in dinner clothes, looking very happy. Teddy wondered where she'd live after she was married. West End Avenue, probably, it was really more refined than Riverside Drive.

The last picture, "The New Love," which shows the romantic pair leaning over a crib, Teddy thought was a trifle indelicate. But if she ever did have a child it would have a governess.

Teddy was popular from the beginning. Everybody said that Mrs. Baer ought to be thankful, she had such luck with both her daughters—not that you'd expect anything different, for they were grand girls and stunning dressers, always a week or two ahead of the styles.

Jules brought a lot of the boys home from high school, where he belonged to a fraternity called Delta Omega. They had a real fraternity house, up in 137th Street, near the Drive, and gave teas and things on Saturday afternoons. It was a very exclusive fraternity, Jules explained when he asked his father for the money. They were bound to keep out the undesirable element. His father said that was the right idea, you had to make some people keep their place.

The winter she was sixteen was a notable time for Teddy. She was being rushed by three of Jules' fraternity brothers, and agreed with her mother that it was better not to be seen too much with one fellow; it might give people ideas. In high school things weren't going so smoothly. Dates after school and every night didn't give her much time to study, and although she took the home economics course, which didn't

make great demands, she couldn't seem to get past the work. It appeared to Mr. and Mrs. Baer that the teachers in Warleigh High School discriminated against Teddy. A high strung, nervous girl really needed individual attention, Mrs. Baer told her husband, and there was some talk of taking her out of school and getting her finished somewhere.

Every day after school Teddy could be found walking on Broadway, from 116th Street down to 96th and back. Usually she was accompanied by one or two of her dearest friends, and the program was the same every day. Up Morningside Park to Blackman's for an Italian nut sundae. Blackman's had a number of advantages in addition to the Italian nut sundaes. If you held your books so that the W. H. S. didn't show the Columbia boys who hung out in Blackman's would think you were a Barnard girl. And there was always the chance of meeting some of the Delta Omegas who were now freshmen in college. Jules hadn't gone to college, he couldn't see any sense in it, since he didn't want to be a professional man. He had a job as city salesman with a cotton house, and his bright snappy manner helped him to succeed. He read the *American Magazine* and "How to Develop Personality for Twenty-Five Cents," and he said that Dr. Frank Crane had a tremendous influence on him.

In April of that year, just after the mid-term examinations, Teddy had a nervous breakdown. The doctor's orders, she told everybody, were that she must stay out of school. Her nerves were simply shattered. A hasty summons to Warleigh on the part of Mrs. Baer, and a hot set-to with Miss Mac-Day, the school disciplinarian, might have been the source of the nervous breakdown, but it was effectual, whatever its origin. Teddy shook the dust of Warleigh off her heels forever.

At first Teddy thought she would like to go for a year to the Franklin School. Franklin was a school on Riverside Drive, which specialized in

Jewish girls of the better sort, and a great many of Teddy's set went there after suffering self-determined nervous breakdowns in high school. But talking it over with Lilyan Eiseman, who was her chum, Teddy decided to stay at home and take private lessons in Literature and French, and she could take an extension course or two at Columbia. It would sound very well to say she went to Columbia, although she had a slight contempt for girls who went to regular college. They always turned into old maid school teachers. Anyway, she was seventeen, and in another year she would be making her debut and going to Europe.

More than likely she would be engaged by the time she came back from her trip. Harty was practically engaged to Jack Levin, of the Westchester Levins. He was a member of the law firm of Krauskopf, Cohen, MacDonald and Levin, and was considered one of the most promising young criminal lawyers in New York. The engagement was to be announced in the fall, and Teddy would be eighteen in the spring. Jack thought it would be a good idea to combine the engagement reception and Teddy's coming out party, but Mrs. Baer was horrified at the suggestion. It would look as though Morris couldn't afford two parties. And anyway, a girl couldn't come out until she was eighteen. Of course Teddy went to dances and theatres and grillrooms, just like the other girls in her crowd, but she really wasn't out yet. Once she had made her debut she'd have to stop running around with kids of nineteen and twenty, and begin taking an interest in men.

## II

"THE Six Greatest Moments" held the place of honor above Teddy's bed, even after the Baers moved to a ten-room apartment in West End Avenue, near 85th Street. Somehow, although she had her room completely refurnished in Venitian green, she wouldn't part with that little white frame. She

didn't think of her life in those terms quite so frequently now, because most of the time when she came home from dancing at the Claridge or the Little Club or the Astor, she was too tired to think at all. But in the secret recesses of her mind she still considered herself the heroine of the pictures, and was sure that some day, rather soon, too, all those thrilling things would happen to her.

One of the odd things about Teddy, she often confided to Lilyan, was her cold nature. She wasn't like the other girls, like Lilyan herself, even. They kept getting mad crushes on various boys in the crowd, shifting every six months or so to a different one—sort of like changing partners in the Virginia Reel, it was. Teddy simply couldn't get excited over boys. She liked them and enjoyed dancing with them, playing tennis and going to the theatre, and all that sort of thing, but she just couldn't let herself go, ever. Her mother had always warned her not to let the boys kiss her or hold her hand, because they wouldn't respect her. A girl should save her kisses for the man she marries. But Teddy never felt the need of this warning, because she never got crushes on the boys. She told Lilyan that she really thought it was because she was keeping her soul for a great love, and once in a burst of confidence, she told her about "The Six Greatest Moments," making her swear she wouldn't repeat it.

April came round again and with it Teddy's debut. The family had hardly recovered from the excitement of Horty's engagement reception, when preparations commenced for Teddy's party. There was considerable discussion regarding the hotel, and after rejecting the McAlpin because it was too commercial, and the Astor because it was too Jewish, and the Plaza because it was too far uptown, they finally decided upon the Biltmore, as striking just the right note of elegance.

Teddy wore a dress of American beauty satin, with an overskirt of silver lace. A long-waisted bodice and dis-

tended hips made her look thinner, she and her mother and Madame Jacobs, the dressmaker, decided. Teddy was not exactly thin. A trifle plump to begin with, her predilection for chocolate fudge and French pastry gave rapid and appreciable manifestation of the nutritive value of those foods. She started on an intensive diet a few weeks before her party, but it wasn't soon enough.

The dance was a great success. They had Smith's Orchestra and a wonderful dinner. It was a bit heavy for the occasion, but Mrs. Baer didn't want to be thought stingy.

The debut once made, Mrs. Baer and Teddy began to plan for the European trip. Mr. Baer was going, too, but he had no preparations to make except to get passage. Teddy and her mother spent a great deal of time at the dressmaker's, and whenever they weren't out getting fitted, they had a seamstress in by the day. They would talk quite seriously of Teddy's future, while Miss Harris stitched busily on cotton summer dresses, and occasionally interjected a shrewd comment.

"You'll have to begin to look ahead now, Teddy," Mrs. Baer said, as she supervised the cutting of a gingham morning dress. "No more kids and young college boys. Something substantial from now on."

Then they would talk of this girl and that of their acquaintance, who had made a desirable marriage, or who had thrown herself away on a poor young man.

"You can't live on love. Poverty seems romantic from a distance," Mrs. Baer declared, "but it ain't much fun."

"It's just as easy to fall in love with a rich fella," said Miss Harris wisely. "You needn't worry about Teddy, Mrs. Baer, she'll do herself right, all right."

Teddy never talked much, which was what her mother expected. She listened and agreed, and thought of "The Six Greatest Moments." Surely the man in the picture was wealthy, but if she found her hero it wouldn't matter much what he had. That reminded her of

Mildred Kahn, who had recently married a young high school teacher, just home from the war. Teddy hadn't cared much for Mildred's engagement ring—she didn't like the setting, it was too plain—and had said so to her aunt at the time. Her aunt had laughed.

"You don't? Well, that's nothing, dearie. Just wait until Mr. Right comes along," this with a characteristic poke in the ribs,—“you'll take any ring he wants to give you.”

Teddy wondered about Mr. Right. She had a feeling that he would come along on the ship or in Europe, the most romantic things happened on voyages. She wondered whether it would happen out on deck in steamer chairs, just like in the picture. She hoped so.

### III

THEY sailed on the *Aquitania* the first week in June. The trip over was pleasant, but uneventful. A number of agreeable youths appeared, who walked with Teddy, threw quoits and danced with her, but Mr. Right did not materialize. Teddy didn't mind particularly because she still had the trip and the return voyage. After a brief stay in England the Baers went to Paris. Teddy wanted to cross the channel by the new air route, but her parents vetoed that.

"I'd rather be seasick than dead," declared Mrs. Baer emphatically, so that was settled.

They arrived at their Paris hotel on the night of a big American ball. Teddy was delighted, and came down to the ballroom in her new black tulle, with silver shoulder straps. She looked perfectly stunning, her mirror told her that. Black hair, freshly waved and built to an incredible size over ears, arms and neck whitened with liquid powder, eyebrows a single arched line, cupid's bow neatly drawn, skirt short enough to show a well-rounded calf, she caught the attention of Sidney Samuels as soon as she entered the room with her parents. He could tell at a glance that she was a New York girl,

she had the class. And after a man has been in Paris for six weeks—especially when he makes an annual trip—he is willing to pass up a whole cityful of French cuties for one honest to goodness girl of his own kind.

Sidney lost little time. He crossed the ballroom to where Mr. Baer was talking with an acquaintance from New York. Soon they were comparing friends, and within ten minutes had discovered that Sidney's brother's wife was a cousin by marriage to the stepson of Mr. Baer's partner.

"I guess we'd be related if we kept it up," smiled Sidney. "Who are the beautiful young ladies with you, your daughters?" as Mrs. Baer and Teddy approached.

Mrs. Baer looked archly pleased, because she knew she appeared young for her age, and it was nice being told so by a good-looking man. Teddy accepted the introduction brightly and they swung off into a jazzy fox trot.

"He's a connection of Rudy Fox's," explained Mr. Baer to his wife. "Head of Samuels and Jacoby, embroideries and laces, and he's over here on his annual buying trip. It's a very good firm. Seems like a nice fellow."

He was a nice fellow. And he was unusually nice-looking. Tall, heavy, but symmetrical from much golfing and rowing. Sidney Samuels was representative of a large class. His tanned face was molded on good lines, his eyes were shrewd and kind, his nose large and curved but not disagreeable, his chin square and always faintly blue, no matter how recently shaven. His hair was thick and black, going to gray on the sides. A distinguished-looking man, one you'd turn around to look at.

They made rapid progress. Sidney and Teddy were together every minute he could take from his buying. Nights he took the Baers to the Parisian theatres, although he refused to let Teddy go to the Folies Bergère. It wasn't the sort of place for an innocent young girl. Mrs. Baer thought it was grand of him to protect Teddy that way. They decided to return to New York on the



same ship, and engaged return passage on the *Aquitania*, for the middle of August. Shortly before the sailing date two cables arrived at the hotel. One was for Mr. Baer, informing him that Sidney was a good risk as a potential son-in-law. The other was for Sidney, informing him that Mr. Baer was a good risk as a potential father-in-law.

Sidney's face wore a slightly pre-occupied look the last few days in Paris, especially after he received a letter from Ethel Morrison, a lady whose apartment and other commodities were paid for by checks signed Sidney Samuels. The letter was rather affectionate, and told Sidney that she missed him very much and hoped he'd be back soon. Well, he would be, and he foresaw trouble from Ethel. He decided not to propose to Teddy until they were back home, and he had seen Ethel. He was sure she'd listen to reason in the form of a generous check. They were all the same, that kind. And he was tired of that sort of life. Why he was nearly forty, and it was time for him to settle down and have his children before he got too old. Teddy was a dandy little girl. He liked her parents, too, which was an important consideration.

Aboard the ship, however, he had another idea. Maybe it would be better if he came back engaged. Then he couldn't be persuaded against it by Ethel, who was, darn her, a very persuasive person at times. The third day out he did it. It was difficult and awkward. Teddy felt it coming and did her best to help. They sat in steamer chairs, blanket wrapped, for the sea air was quite chill. Sidney wasn't exactly in love, he was past that sort of thing, and he wasn't a good actor. Still, he owed it to Teddy to make the thing as romantic as possible. Young girls felt cheated without it. Once the actual proposal was over, everything would be fine. He braced himself for the plunge, reaching under her steamer rug to catch her hand. It proved quite simple, after all.

"Little girl," he said, looking at her in what he thought was a lover-like way, "you've known my feelings all along.

Will you marry me?" Teddy sighed happily.

"Oh, Sidney," she said. "Yes, I will."

"That's great," and he reached over to kiss her. For an instant her head rested on his breast, and when she moved away there was a faint crackling of paper in the upper pocket. It was Ethel's letter. Sidney frowned swiftly, then his face cleared, and they went to break the news.

Teddy was very happy. Everything had happened the way she had always dreamed, just the way it had happened in the picture. Here she was, eighteen, engaged to a wonderful, good-looking man, one of the best catches in New York. If any thrills of romantic love were absent, they weren't missed. The thrill of triumph was sufficiently potent to be mistaken for the other. Anyway, Teddy was very happy.

Teddy decided not to announce the engagement until the beginning of October, when everybody would be back from the country. Then, on the first Sunday of that month, in the *Times* engagement column, ran the regulation notice:

**SAMUELS—BAER.** Mr. and Mrs. Morris Baer, of 529 West End Avenue, announce the engagement of their daughter Thérèse (Teddy), to Mr. Sidney Samuels, son of Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Samuels, of this city and Edgemere. Mr. Samuels was a captain in the Quartermaster's Department during the war, serving fourteen months overseas. He was stationed at Bordeaux, France. He is a member of the Advance Club, the All Star Boat Club and the Municipal Athletic Club. Miss Baer was educated at Columbia University. Reception at the Hotel St. Regis, Sunday, October 28, from three to six.

Mrs. Baer would like to have seen the notice in the society column, but she said you had to have pull to get in there, and they didn't know any reporters. And they couldn't begin to send out cards, they knew too many people, and would be sure to overlook somebody.

Everyone was delighted, and the presents started coming in immediately.



The Baers had to take practically all the furniture out of the music room to find space for them. That was not counting the personal gifts Teddy received. Sidney gave her a stunning little Packard coupé and a chauffeur. Of course, that didn't really count, because he used it sometimes himself, so he gave her a flexible bracelet of diamonds and sapphires. Her parents gave her a gold mesh bag with a cabochon sapphire clasp, and Horty and Jules gave her the chatelaine things to match. From Daddy and Mother Samuels she received a diamond medallion on a platinum chain, and her other gifts, though less important, corresponded with these. She was very happy.

## IV

FROM now on Teddy was absorbed with her trousseau. She decided not to get much, because things went out of style so quickly; so she limited her outer apparel to a suit, a fur coat, four afternoon dresses, three evening gowns, an evening wrap and three trotteurs. With underwear it was different; she wanted a lot of that. Sidney took her to a friend who was in the wholesale underwear business, but she wouldn't let him help her pick the things out.

"I bet you don't know the difference between a camisole and a Billie Burke," she said, banteringly. Sidney didn't tell what he knew, but said:

"I know a lot about a Teddy Baer, anyway, don't I?" They laughed for an hour over that.

A few weeks after the reception—they planned an early marriage—Teddy had some of the girls up to look at the presents and her trousseau. There was Lilyan Eiseman, her best friend, and Beatrice Landauer, and two or three others she had known in high school. Most of them were engaged, too, though none had done quite as well as Teddy. And then there was Mildred Kahn, although Teddy really wasn't so intimate with her since she had married that little high school teacher, Dan Miller, and gone to live over on Brooklyn Heights.

The girls were all there except Mildred, and had exclaimed over the presents, which were ranged about the music room on tables, in very much the same way as articles are placed in a large gift shop—the fifty-dollar table, twenty-five-dollar table, and so on down. The cards of the senders were conspicuously attached. Some of the things, like lamps and benches and mirrors, were standing on the floor or hanging on the wall. On the bed in Teddy's room lay the trousseau dresses, each one a triumph of Fifth Avenue art. Teddy was just holding up for their inspection her wedding dress material, which was silver cloth backed with white satin, when the maid led Mildred into the room.

"I'm so sorry to be late," she told Teddy, as she took off her tweed top coat, "but I had to finish correcting some English papers for Danny. He's studying for a promotion and he doesn't like to take the time for anything like that as long as I can do it."

"You go to school, too, don't you?" asked Lilyan, as Teddy lovingly spread out the shimmering folds of her silver cloth for Mildred to see. "Seems to me you could find something better to do."

"Well," replied Mildred, "I like to keep up with Danny. He knows an awful lot."

"I'd rather marry a man," broke in Teddy, not at all unkindly, "who didn't know so much. Then I wouldn't have to bother knowing much myself. Anyway, Sid mightn't know so much about books and literature, but he knows enough about practical things to satisfy me. I'm no highbrow."

Mildred flushed a little, but made no answer. She examined the wedding gifts, the dresses and linens and underwear, and then they went into the dining room for hot chocolate and cakes. There was some delicious French pastry, which Teddy nobly passed up.

"I'll have to start dieting some time," she laughed, looking in the mirror at her faintly increasing double chin, "so it might as well be now. How do you manage to keep so thin, Mildred?"

"Hard work and climbing three

flights of stairs, I suppose," said Mildred; "and I guess it's about time for me to start home. It takes quite a long time to get to Clark Street, you know."

"For heaven's sake, Mil, how can you like in Brooklyn?" asked Teddy. "I wouldn't live out there for the best man on earth."

"Not even for Sidney?"

"I should say not. I'd never marry him if I had to do that." Again Mildred made no reply, but found her things and went away with the other girls. Teddy, dressing for dinner, looked at her "Six Greatest Moments" and meditated.

"Now that's over," she thought. "It happened just the way the picture shows it, too. That picture is my lucky charm." She spoke about Mildred to her mother, who had just come in.

"Poor thing," she said, "she had on the same old coat she got when she was married, and she has to help her husband correct papers."

"She lives in Brooklyn, don't she?" asked Mrs. Baer.

"Yes," said Teddy, "up three flights of stairs, and she's so brave, she never lets on that she minds. Even when she saw my things she didn't act as though she minded. Well, she was always a queer kid. Clever—but a nut."

## V

In April, a few days after Teddy's nineteenth birthday, they were married. Sidney had been surprised at the singular way in which Ethel had acted. She hadn't made any fuss at all until he broached the subject of money. Then she'd kicked up an awful row. The willingness with which she had let him go had amazed him at first. But then, he told himself, she had never really cared for him. That kind don't.

"I knew it would happen some day, Sid," she had said, when told about his engagement. "Don't worry. I won't bother you. Let's get it over with as soon as possible now."

He had asked her what she would do, and she had said for him not to bother

about that, she would be looked out for. He wondered what she meant, and whether she had another guy on the string. Then he said that he'd see she was made comfortable, and tried to discuss a settlement. It was at this point that Ethel hit the ceiling.

"Money," she had almost shrieked, "I don't want your damned money," and then she'd broken down and cried, become hysterical.

Sidney had soothed her and talked sense to her, and finally she had seen the light and accepted some gilt-edged bonds. She had just been stalling, of course, making a grandstand play. There's no use talking, women of that sort are all alike.

The wedding was at the Ritz, and was a very elaborate affair. Teddy had six bridesmaids, all dressed in orchid tulle, with pale green sashes, just as she had always planned, and Horty, in a cream filet lace dress over Alice blue, was matron of honor. Teddy made a beautiful bride. She was hardly nervous at all, and wore her silver tissue gown with real dignity. It was made, as Teddy's dresses usually were, rather long in the waist, to conceal her bulk. The bodice was cut in wide points, narrowing toward the shoulders, so that later it could be worn as an evening dress. She wore no jewelry except her engagement ring.

The ceremony was brief; they hadn't wanted any long sermon. After that ordeal was over, and Teddy's left hand bore the little diamond and platinum circlet that proclaimed her Mrs. Sidney Samuels, there was dancing for a while until dinner, toward the end of which Teddy and Sidney, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Baer, slipped off to the apartment, where they changed into traveling clothes.

"It will be so much more comfortable than dressing in the hotel," Teddy had said when suggesting the plan; "and besides I want one more look at my old room before I leave it forever." She really wanted to see her picture before she left on her honeymoon, to tell it that once more she had achieved its glory.

"Whatever my little girl wants," Sidney had replied; "she's a sentimental puss, isn't she. Well, that's right; girls should be that way."

Teddy went into her room, where her traveling suit and blue fox scarf were laid out on the bed. Her mother started to accompany her, but Teddy asked to be left alone. Mrs. Baer went out into the library, where her husband and Sidney were bending over the table. Mr. Baer was screwing the cap on a fountain pen as Sidney folded a little oblong piece of paper, a check for twenty-five thousand dollars, and placed it in his pocket. The men smiled and shook hands. Mrs. Baer walked over to Sidney and put her two hands on his shoulders, giggling nervously and significantly as she did so.

"Well, Sonny," she laughed, "be good to my little Teddy. And Sid, you'll be careful of her, won't you? You know I never told her anything. I just didn't have the heart."

"That's all right, Ma," Sidney smilingly replied; "everything will be all right. I'd rather tell her myself, anyway."

## VI

In her bedroom Teddy was fully dressed, gloves buttoned, veil adjusted, bag in hand. She walked to the foot of the bed and gazed tenderly at her panel. "The Six Greatest Moments of a Girl's Life." Well, three of hers had passed, and they had happened just as she had planned. She thought of her wedding ceremony, she and Sidney standing before Dr. Silverstein, just as the girl and the man in her picture had knelt before the altar. She wished she could take the picture along, but it was too big, and anyway Sidney would laugh at her. But as soon as she came back from her honeymoon she would take it over to her apartment. She always wanted it with her. In a few minutes the fourth picture would be added—"The Honeymoon." They drove down to the train, but they weren't alone then, because the chauffeur's seat was inside the car. Soon they were in their drawing room,

waiting for the train to pull out. Everyone in Grand Central seemed to know they were just married, and people gave them the friendliest smiles. Even the porter was unusually polite.

Teddy sat down, a nervous little smile on her lips, as Sidney closed the door. He came over and sat down next to her, opened his arms, and she crept in. Neither spoke. They just sat there, rather stiffly at first. Sidney bent down and kissed her.

"Darling!" As he spoke there came a knock at the door.

"Call fo' Mistah Samuels," bellowed the porter, a grin in his voice. "Call fo' Mistah Samuels." It was plain that he knew honeymooners when he saw them. Sidney stood up, patently annoyed.

"Some fool trying to be funny," he replied to Teddy's inarticulate question. "I knew I shouldn't have let them know at the office where we were going. I'd better answer or they'll never go."

"Don't be long, dear," said Teddy, as he kissed her good-bye and walked toward the platform.

"Lady to see you, sah," said the porter with evident relish. "You kin step outside, dey's plainty time."

Puzzled, Sidney walked up the long incline toward the waiting-room. Just inside the gate stood a woman. It was Ethel.

"Sidney!" was all she said. A dark flush mounted to his hair.

"My God! What are you doing here? Are you trying to pull any third act stuff? What do you want, anyhow—more money? How did you know where to find me?"

Ethel was pale and very calm.

"They told me at the office," she said. "No, I don't want more money, Sid. I suppose I'm foolish and inconsiderate, but I just wanted to see you once more before . . . before you belong to someone else. That's all. I suppose you wouldn't kiss me good-bye?"

Sidney cleared his throat. He bent down and gave her a swift kiss.

"You're a good kid, Ethel. Good-bye," he said.

"Good-bye, Sid," and she turned and was lost in the crowd. Back in the drawing room Teddy was thinking of Sidney and wondering what would happen next.

"What was it, darling?" she asked, as he came in, frowning.

"Nothing but a fool jokester," he said. "Those guys at the office framed that. They're finished now, though."

He picked her up in his strong arms, patting her gently on the shoulder as he kissed her eyes and hair and cheeks and chin, and then her mouth.

"Hmmm, nice," purred Teddy, and thought of her panel: "Alone at Last." Well, this was even better than the picture. She was very happy.

The honeymoon was ideal. They had wonderful weather, moonlight nights and warm, gentle days. Sidney was consideration itself, and Teddy was adorable. Both felt that there was nothing like married life.

## VII

AFTER a three weeks' trip through the Thousand Islands the Samuels pulled into Grand Central Terminal at four o'clock on a bright Spring afternoon.

"Think I'll drop over to the office, if you don't mind too much, Petty. I really ought to look over the mail. I won't be long, and I'll meet you home."

"Thinking of business already," Teddy pouted playfully. "Well, you do that and I'll go and surprise mamma. She doesn't expect us. Be home early, though."

Mrs. Baer was at a bridge game, the maid told her regretfully, and wouldn't be home before six o'clock, so Teddy decided not to wait. She'd get a few things and go home—she thrilled at the word—and get ready for Sid. She went into her old bedroom and looked for the things she wanted, a favorite hat, some gloves, and a few unimportant pieces of jewelry. She looked at the picture, and wondered whether she ought to take it with her too. It seemed rather childish, now that she was a married woman, yet it had always brought

her good luck. She decided to take it.

It was only a short walk to her own place, a few blocks farther south on West End Avenue, in an elaborate and expensive apartment hotel. Once home, Teddy looked for room to hang the panel, but couldn't find a suitable place, so she hid it carefully under a pile of silk underwear in her bureau. Then she bathed and dressed, putting on one of her prettiest frocks, a semi-formal affair of lace and ribbon. It made her look rather plump, but Sid never seemed to notice that, so why should she worry? He didn't like scrawny women, anyway; he had said so hundreds of times. She ordered dinner sent up from the dining room at seven o'clock.

A little before six Sidney came home. He seemed rather preoccupied as she met him at the door with a welcoming kiss, and remained unusually quiet while he shaved and dressed. Teddy stayed in the room with him and teased him about his manner.

"Tired of me so soon," she rallied him, "or has business come between us already? I won't be neglected, like a wife in the movies."

Sidney smiled, somewhat mechanically, but he kissed Teddy convincingly enough.

Sidney was in a curious frame of mind. He was puzzled and a little worried, but through his other feelings ran a current of faint relief. The cause of this was a package he had found on his desk upon his arrival in the office, a brief note, and a whispered conference with Walter Jacoby, his partner.

Walter had been out when he arrived, and he had gone straight to his own office, where dominating a pile of letters was a thick, long, manila-wrapped package addressed to him in the slanting, undistinguished handwriting that was Ethel's. He opened it wonderingly, to discover the sheaf of gilt-edged bonds he had given her the last night they had been together. On top was a folded piece of note paper, with a few carefully written lines:

"Dear Sid," ran the note, "you have

*been very good to me, but I don't think I'll need these. I want to offer you my best wishes for a happy married life.*

"ETHEL."

He examined the postmark. They had been mailed a week ago. There was only one explanation; she had found some other fellow to look out for her; probably she'd had him before she got through with Sid. Well, he shrugged, that relieved him of any lingering sense of responsibility he might have felt.

A little while later Walter came in. He looked funny, kind of embarrassed and uncomfortable.

"Well, aren't you glad to see me," asked Sid, "or has business gone so well without me that you want to buy me out?"

"Listen, Sid," said Walter, with evident nervousness, "I didn't want to spoil your honeymoon, so I didn't let you know. But Sid, it's about Ethel; she's—she's dead."

Sidney clutched the desk incomprehendingly.

"Dead! dead!" he faltered. "For God's sake, what do you mean? Was she in an accident? *She didn't kill herself, did she?*"

Walter looked miserable. "We don't know," he replied. "The housekeeper found her unconscious last Friday morning and called the doctor. He said she was dead from an overdose of veronal. She had a headache, and took it so she could sleep, the woman said, and nobody can tell whether the overdose was accidental or not. You got any clue?"

Sidney thought of the package of bonds, but didn't mention them.

"No," he said, "not a thing. Haven't heard anything from her since we broke. What'd you do then? Did you keep things quiet? Baer get any wind of it?"

"No, he didn't," Walter said. "She had a brother out in New Jersey somewhere. The police notified him and he came and got her body."

"My God!" groaned Sid. "Did they call the police?"

"Well, they had to; but the cops said it was accidental death, so it didn't get in the papers. It's all quiet now. Poor kid, she was pretty square."

She had been that, Sid admitted to himself. He had a guilty feeling, as though he were in a way responsible for her death, but if the police called it an accident, why then it must be one, because they were only too glad to stir things up. He was thoughtful all the way home, reviewing his life with Ethel, and thinking how fond of her he had been. She had reached depths in him that Teddy could never get near. But on the whole, he reflected, maybe it was a good thing. He was sorry she was dead, of course, but this way there could be no comeback.

Teddy was very happy. She loved her little apartment, with its fashionable reputation and furniture. She loved her big, golf-playing husband and the things he could give her. She thought of "The Six Greatest Moments" hidden away in her bureau. She sighed blissfully. All but one of the prophetic pictures fulfilled. Well, the last one wouldn't happen for a long time, they decided. She wanted to have a good time first. Then children. She looked forward to a gay summer. She was very happy.

### VIII

THEY lived in the hotel until October, when they found a delightful five-room apartment in Eighty-seventh Street, near Amsterdam Avenue. A competent maid took care of the place and did what little cooking there was. A woman came in to do the heavy work and the washing, and things ran very smoothly. Teddy and Sid dined out a good deal, at least once a week at her mother's and once a week at his. Frequently they picked up another couple in the Packard and went down the road somewhere for dinner and dancing. Sid could have managed without it, but he realized that Teddy was very young and was entitled to a good time. Often he was rather tired when he came home from a hard



day at the office, but he didn't like to spoil the little girl's pleasure, so he didn't say anything when she told him of plans for the evening. As a matter of fact, it sometimes occurred to him, he ran around even more now than he had before his marriage. One thing about a girl of Ethel's sort was that you couldn't take her out much. You didn't want to be seen. But Teddy was only a kid. He couldn't expect her to change overnight. In a little while, he felt sure, she would begin to settle down.

He was right. In a little while something happened which made it necessary for her to settle down. A few weeks before their first anniversary Teddy made an alarming discovery. Her first impulse was to call Sidney on the phone, but she changed her mind and walked up to her mother's house for a consultation.

"It's too bad," her mother sympathized with her. "You could have enjoyed yourself yet for a while. But in a way it's just as good. It would have to happen some time, anyway, and it might as well be now. It's nice to have your children while you're young, so you can grow up with them, be a companion to them. Besides, it's the best hold you can have on a man."

Teddy was not so philosophical. It was decidedly annoying. All her spring clothes had been bought, and now she wouldn't be able to wear them. And there were so many things scheduled for the summer and fall that she'd have to miss. This she pointed out to her mother.

"Oh, you'd always have that," said Mrs. Baer, "so it doesn't make any difference. Now, whatever you do, don't let Sid know you're sorry. What do you suppose he got married for? And think, you'll be a mother before you're twenty-one! Won't that be grand?"

"Oh, sure," smiled Teddy. "I guess you want the honor of being a young grandmother. Well, at that, it looks as though I'd beat Horty." She began to take a more satisfactory view of the situation, and by the time Sidney came home in the evening she was quite happy over it.

He was overjoyed when she told him. "Little mother," he said, beaming. "I'm so happy. I hope it'll be a boy. We must take very good care of you now, darling. You mustn't get tired or nervous, you wonderful little girl."

Pretty soon Teddy stopped going out to dance in the evenings, and they spent most of their time at home. As the time drew nearer Sidney grew more and more devoted. He was the soul of consideration, and never left Teddy alone for a moment. He even insisted upon having a nurse for her several months before the baby came.

"I don't want you to stir a step," he told her. "The nurse can be with you all the time, and she'll get you everything you want. My little mother mustn't exert herself. It would be dangerous."

"Believe me," said Teddy, "I don't want to stir a step. I'm so tired all the time."

There were moments when Teddy reverted to her original feeling of discontent about the approaching event. Of course it would be grand to have the baby when it was all over, and it would be fun to beat Horty, but somehow that part of it seemed to be in abeyance when Horty, smartly attired for a tea dance or a dinner party, dropped in to see the invalid on her way downtown.

Miss Parsons, the nurse, was duly installed in the apartment, sleeping in the music room, which was being made over into a nursery. She was a slender, pale young woman, with a voice as crisp as the little white caps that sat so becomingly on her very red hair. She joked a good deal about her hair, which she said she hated.

"In books they always speak of copper hair or bronze hair, or something poetical like that," she laughed one night during a three-handed bridge game, when Sidney jocularly referred to her as Miss Bricktop. "But mine is just plain red. Oh, well, I guess I'll get used to it in time."

After a while they had to give up the three-handed bridge games. Teddy, always very tired by nightfall, went to



bed soon after dinner, and Sidney would sit and play twenty-one or double canfield with Miss Parsons. She taught him a game called *Bon Papa*, which was played with five dice, and over which they laughed a great deal. Teddy wanted them to go to the movies around the corner, but Sid wouldn't be brute enough to go out and leave her alone. She thought he ought to have a little diversion.

"I don't see how you can stand it, dear," she said one evening. "Sitting home like this night after night. If I felt well it would drive me crazy. Really, I won't mind if you and Miss Parsons go to the pictures."

"Well," replied Sidney, "to tell you the truth, I enjoy staying home and having a quiet little talk or a game of cards. I get enough diversion when the family comes. I'm no spring chicken, you know. It agrees with me; I've gained seven pounds in the past month. Anyway," with a playful pat on the shoulder, "what would people say if they saw me going out with a swell red-headed girl? No, we'll just stay home and talk."

Often they chatted all evening, until it was twelve or one o'clock before he knew it. Miss Parsons was a very interesting girl, he found, who had seen and done a thing or two in her young life. She was only twenty-five. How different these professional women were from the little sheltered girls like Teddy. Especially nurses. Not that a man would care to marry one of them, but they certainly were good company. She had a good business head, too. She was one of the few women who understood you when you talked about market value or foreign exchange, for instance. Really a very clever girl. And no high-brow, either. He began to understand why Arthur Josephs always went in so strong for nurses.

The baby was born on Christmas Eve. It was a girl, and Sidney was a tiny bit disappointed. He had hoped for a son to carry on the Samuels name. But he didn't show his disappointment. He

rushed right out and bought Teddy a wonderful string of pearls.

In three weeks she left the hospital, and ensconced the baby, whose name was Marjorie, in the white nursery in charge of Miss Parsons. Teddy would be going out a lot to make up for lost time and she didn't want to worry about the baby while she was away. She felt fine and was already planning a very gay time for the rest of the winter.

The first evening they were back in the apartment Sidney came home early, and while Miss Parsons was preparing the baby's bath in the next room they stood together over the sleeping child. Teddy, in a becoming rose-colored negligée, which hid her plumpness, was radiant. All the discomfort of the past months was faded out, finished. Now she was complete, she felt. At twenty a happy wife and mother, just as she had always planned, just as her panel had predicted. Her worries were over. She smiled happily at Sidney, who was gazing in a rather abstracted manner through the open door, whence came sounds of Miss Parsons at her task.

"Our New Love," said Teddy softly. "Isn't it wonderful?" She was thinking of her panel. At last it had been fulfilled. She was glad her baby was a girl so she could give her "The Six Greatest Moments." She knew it would make her daughter as happy as it had made her.

"How does it feel to be a Daddy?" she asked fondly.

Her husband's eyes traveled slowly from the open door to the crib. As he bent rather absent-mindedly over the little bed his gaze was caught by something that gleamed brightly on the whiteness of the counterpane. It was a long single strand of very red hair. Absently Sidney lifted it off the fluffy cover and speculatively he wound it around his little finger.

"It feels wonderful," he said.

Teddy sighed contentedly. Her Six Greatest Moments were over. She was very happy.

# The Killdee

*By George Sterling*

WITH sound and broken gleam  
Of silver fled the stream,  
As fled the gipsy moments of that day.  
The shadows where I lay  
Were woven with the shadows of my dream.

A lone bird, crying "Ai!"  
Under a lonely sky  
Haunted the summer with her note of grief,  
That seemed to say how brief  
The time was ere the summer's flower should die.

I hated her—that bird  
Whose wild, reiterant word  
Was but the burden of the conscious heart.  
So may the singer's art  
Echo a music we have never heard.

But hate or not, her call  
Was in the noon's blue hall,  
Waking the question that all sorrows wake,  
Though heart and music break,  
Ere the hushed lips of Evening answer all.

The twilight came at last,  
Reluctant, yet too fast,  
The stream alone had voice within the peace  
That bade her cry to cease.  
I missed her grieving, now that it had passed!

Beyond our common needs  
What subtle hunger pleads  
For the unhappy? Crave we over-much  
Beauty's autumnal touch,  
That wakes the soul to follow where she leads?



# The Higher Learning in America

VII

Cornell

*By Hendrik Willem van Loon*  
(Author of "The Story of Mankind")

I

IT will not be easy to write this article. I can hear the shade of Decatur stamping up and down the floor of the attic. "Remember, gentlemen," he repeats and repeats, "remember, gentlemen, our Alma Mater! May she always be right, but right or wrong, our Alma Mater!" And a hidden chorus of professional graduates intones "Far Above Cayuga's Waters." But we of Antioch, who are familiar with Saint Paul and the other saints, know well that austere face and that sombre voice which now speaketh words of solemn warning: "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Here is to our Alma Mater and here is to Truth. May we be loyal to both!

This story begins at the beginning, which was a very warm day of a very warm month of July of the year 1902 A.V.N. I had come to America three days before, for no particular reason except that I wanted to go somewhere and America seemed a handier place to go to than Australia or Asia. Africa was out of the running just then because a wicked tribe of Dutch farmers had forced a war upon the unprepared and defenseless British Empire, and people with a name and figure as hopelessly Dutch as mine would not have been welcomed at Cape Town. And so I went to America. But what I was to do there I really did not know.

Behold, therefore, a no doubt very disagreeable young man with strong convictions upon a dozen subjects of which he knew nothing, and stronger prejudices upon three dozen others of which he knew less, landing at his ancestral port of Hoboken and going to an unknown destination with the enthusiasm of a parcel post package being dispatched from Xenia to Springfield, Ohio. But Providence watched over his fate. I happened to have an uncle who had married an American lady of strange charm, who actually did not deserve to have fallen among the Philistines of a small Dutch city. She happened to know a man who had been in The Hague as historical adviser to the commission which was to discover who was right and who was wrong in the absurd brawl between the late President Cleveland and the late Lord Salisbury (to think that that was actually the name of a man once upon a time and not of a cigarette!) concerning the United States and Venezuela. By advice of this unknown friend, I was to spend a few years in an American college, that I might learn the current language and the equally current manners and customs of the strange new country. And so on this very hot day of the very hot month of July of the year 1902 A.V.N. I rode for several hours across many mountains (I had seen better ones in Europe, I thought, although I soon learned not to give expression to such unpatriotic sentiments), and late

that afternoon I reached the town of Ithaca, Tompkins County, N. Y., U. S. A.

There I was met by a man who would never forgive me if I put his name in bold black type and stated that for sheer unselfish devotion to the happiness of others, for chivalry of purpose and nobility of soul, he might have wandered this earth a worthy companion of Saint Francis. Nor is it necessary. All good Cornellians know who I meant as soon as I uttered the word unselfishness. And then, totally ignorant of the lay of the land and in the darkness of night, I was taken to the top of a steep hill and I had my first view of Cornell.

## II

HIGH above us a myriad of stars shone with a brilliancy the like of which I had never seen in the water-soaked heavens of the Low Countries. It must have been during the summer school (I never was able to reconstruct the scene in the daytime) and many windows were lighted. Somewhere there was music. Whether it was good music or bad music I do not know. Nor does it matter. Upon such occasions all music is good.

The Library was still open. This I remember, because I was accustomed to the dignified gloom of the European libraries and I liked the sight of the cheerful fellows tripping in and out past the memorial tablets where the famous feud of Cornell's early middle ages stands engraved upon the dark slab of granite. It was an intimate picture of pleasant and gay and well-mannered people who apparently had gathered upon this spot to study and make life more agreeable for each other amid surroundings of very great charm and beauty.

This impression was strengthened the next morning. I was taken to the lake, and there, from the distance, I beheld the high hill with its many towers—the roofs of the buildings. And when the hour struck there were carried to us the tinkly little notes of that strange little

tune which becomes so much part of a Cornellian's mind that he will suddenly hear it in Moscow or Peking when the jingling of a falling spoon starts a corresponding reverberation in that deep cavern of his mind where lie buried his dearest recollections.

Then came the afternoon and a short visit to the treasure of the Library—which in the brutal light of day looked less idealistic and a little more like a good modern jail—and there, amid the treasures of those three collections that have made Cornell famous wherever scholars gather together to partake of food and thought, I was suddenly struck with a sharp vision of the past and the present. Four days earlier, sailing up the harbor of New York, someone had remarked: "There stands the greatest Renaissance city of the modern world!" I found a corresponding formula for Cornell. "Here, by the shade of Abelard, stands the greatest mediæval college of America!" And I thought of Fulda and Hildesheim and the many mid-European cloister schools built at an even earlier age in the wilderness that the savage Teutons might learn the useful art of reading and writing. And if at that moment the great Carolus himself had come riding by on his mighty horse, I should not have been surprised to see him discuss the noble game of Arabic chess with the faithful Eginhard, his friend, although his son-in-law.

But when I spoke of this that same evening, I did not manage to make my meaning entirely clear.

"Wait until you know us a little better," said my companion while carving his name in the centre table of the Dutch Kitchen (it was a novelty in those days). "Wait until you know us a little better. Then you will understand that there is nothing mediæval about us, but that we are keeping ahead of the rest of the Eastern colleges and soon will beat them. Let me show you the new engineering building tomorrow and the new grounds for the agricultural school. Nothing mediæval about those." As indeed there was not.

## III

HERE the curtain goes down for five seconds to denote the rapid passing of twenty years. When it rises again there lies dead one of the most famous of Cornell's sons. He has fallen a victim to overwork, to fatigue and worry, trying to put some order into the original chaos of America "over there." He is gone quite suddenly, but when his will is read it is seen that he speaks ominous words from the grave and asks his widow to do something for Cornell to make "the place more human."

The news spread as such news will—and it reached Cornell. And once more I turned to a chance neighbor at the well-known round table of the Town and Gown Club and said: "Good God, what an indictment!" But the remark was not understood.

"I don't know what the fellow was talking about," and the answer bristled with hostile suspicion. "It seems to me that we are human enough."

It seemed to Ezra Stowbody that the Gopher Prairie First National Bank was a Greek temple worthy of the heathenish Acropolis.

If I may be forgiven a bit of inverted Scriptural wisdom, I should like to state that it is not fair to hold the Fathers responsible for the sins of the Sons. When old Ezra Cornell, he of the strange goatee and the shrewd, kindly wisdom, founded his college "where all men might be able to receive instruction in all the useful arts and sciences," he hardly knew that the world was entering upon an era when the sciences would crowd the arts into a forgotten little corner of the old Beebe farm which he had just turned into the Campus of his "school."

What I am about to say is not only true of our own Ezra, but of the other Johns and Williams and Peters who during the Emersonian stage of our civilization planted and founded and builded that the coming generation might be worthy successors to the founders of the great Industrial Empire of the Western Hemisphere. They

were practical men. They had been schooled in a cold world of frozen faucets and shivering parlors. They were just men and believed in equal rights for all men and women, black, white and semi-colored. They had never heard of the eight-hour day and would have laughed at the idea of the forty-two-hour week. They had added a new beatitude to the familiar creed: "Blessed are those who work, for they may enjoy the fruit of their labor."

But withal they were proud and stiff-necked aristocrats of the intellect. They well understood the value of the many things that they themselves had missed or had been able to acquire only at a terrific outlay of energy and perseverance. They insisted that their children continue the tradition of good books and honest plain talk. They had not read widely, but they had read well. Their books were their household gods. Let their "schools" be a real centre for those things which—next to their particular denomination—were nearest to their hearts.

In the course of time they died and were solemnly deposited in the marble mausoleums which a grateful board of trustees erected in their memory.

But alas, they had been the last of our cultural Mohicans. As soon as they were dead the era of "prosperity and prosperity without stint" turned a peaceful republic into a disordered domain of "catch-as-catch-can."

The Germans, who have coined words as ugly as the decorations on poor old Zinckie's erstwhile place of business, speak of "Massenproduktion." We have the feebler word, "mass-production." It is less pompous and therefore less objectionable. The age of mass-production had set in. It turned old Ezra's school into the third or second or fourth largest (I forget which) college—it covered the old Beebe farm and miles upon miles of adjoining plow-land into a vast "educational plant"—it made five buildings grow where but one barn had stood before—it opened wide the portals of the academic halls and it turned a mighty fortress of learning,



planted in the heart of the wilderness, into a complacent educational factory.

It is hardly fair to say these unpleasant things in an article devoted to Cornell. They hold true of almost every other university, college and academy in this fair land. A college career no longer was regarded as a badge of honor, a reward for hard work. It became the birthright of every plumber's son. I use the word advisedly, and not in its genealogical sense. Heaven forbid that we should make the Tuesday Evening Transcript a new Almanach de Gotha for the socially elect who may grace our Seats of Learning. But the average type of student changed almost overnight.

In the olden days the registrar of a college like Cornell knew fairly well what sort of boys would apply for admission. There were the sons of the well-situated families in the nearby cities and towns. These, however, formed only a small percentage. Their comrades who gave a very definite color to the old college life were of a different ilk. They came from the farm. "Coming from the farm" in the northern part of New York State presupposed a strong and rugged physique, for only the hardier children survived in those hard pre-Sears-Roebuck days. And "going to college" meant almost incredible sacrifice on the part of both the children and the parents. When a student with such antecedents had worked his way through four years of hardships he had obtained something definite. He might not be a fit candidate for the dignity of principal in a dancing academy; he might not qualify as head waiter at the Ritz, but he knew how to hack himself a career out of the unyielding granite of the work-a-day world. He stood on firm feet and, as he had bought his education at a terrible expense to himself and his parents, he appreciated what he had obtained and cherished it as Peary may have cherished the sleigh that carried him to the North Pole.

But the great migration which set in during the nineties was of a different

variety. The industrial development of the Middle West had filled Detroit, Chicago, Pittsburgh and the other cities of this region with prosperous people who lacked the traditions of their old pioneering and semi-pioneering ancestors. They insisted that their children get ahead in life, and "getting ahead" meant qualifying for a better job than papa had held down. The college was there to train the boy for this purpose. Would the college kindly oblige?

Need I give the answer?

In almost every instance the college hastened forward with eager compliance, and our Higher Seats of Learning became the stationary adjuncts of so many successful correspondence schools. The college president left his cloistered study and grew into an efficient executive. And the spirit of Butler presided at the meeting of the board of trustees. Alas, it was not the spirit of Samuel, but of Nicholas—and that meant a very different story.

#### IV

As I said in the beginning, a short essay of this nature is apt to be very personal; it can't well be otherwise. I remember how, a few years ago, I happened to be present at a very pathetic party. It was given by one of those tactful hostesses who are forever trying to put together what God has most evidently put asunder. Suddenly she swooped down upon two of her guests and said:

"You two ought to meet each other. You must have so much in common. You are both Yale men!"

They were, and they had this in common: that they had used the same trains of the N. Y., N. H. & H. R. R. and that for four years they had been present (in different parts of the bleachers, however) at the annual ceremony of the Victoire Morale. For the rest of their time they had been as many miles apart as His Late Majesty Nicholas Romanov and the chief tenor of his bedraggled chorus of Volga boatmen. But as they were both Yale men they were now



forced to sit together that they might reminisce and be happy.

One of the two was an amiable young man who was innocent of all intellectual knowledge and suspicion. He had gone to New Haven from a good preparatory school and there he had inherited his older brother's apartment and reputation. He had rowed on the crew and as he was without any violent opinions (for the simple reason that he was without any opinions at all) he had drifted easily into all the best clubs and had been generally liked as a somewhat simple-minded but entirely courteous and affable companion. Unfortunately he had never been able to work off a condition in Freshman German and therefore he had failed to obtain a degree.

The other man was a shy and retiring young Jew, who from a state of dreadful poverty had managed to work his way up to a scholarship. He had been forced to scrape dishes in unsavory boarding-houses that he might eat, and stoke furnaces and spend endless hours in library stacks that he might pay for his bed. After college, while our sporting friend had entered papa's brokerage firm, the other boy had continued his studies and had at last taken a medical degree. He had made a name for himself as a pathologist and his days of hardship were over for good. Both men were without an ounce of false pride or equally false modesty. They liked each other and they appreciated each other's virtues, but when they tried to be Yale men in common they found themselves lost in a mire of conflicting recollections. They soon returned to dry land and went out to the dining-room where they stood around the grape-juice bowl. Prohibition they could discuss with an equal enthusiasm of honest emotion, but although their feet had trod the same campus for four years that locality as seen through the eyes of the other was to each a complete *terra incognita*.

Unfortunately this sort of thing could happen this very day to almost any pair of honest Cornellians. Fifty years of

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class stratification in the outside world have made their influence felt upon our colleges and the happy hours of those paradise times when all the boys—when the entire Cornell contingent—was forced to walk up and slide down the steep slopes of Buffalo Street if they would attend classes in the leaky rooms of Morrill Hall (built by the enthusiastic but inexperienced hands of the original student body)—those days are gone and gone for good. The automobile has done more harm to the ancient feeling of a common fate than anything else. But that condition is no way peculiar to Cornell and we shall therefore hasten to leave the subject.

In the *adagio lamentoso* of our introduction, I deplored a certain intellectual deadness—a complete misunderstanding on the part of many of those who until recently were called to rule the destinies of Cornell—as to the rôle of leadership which by Divine Grace ought to be the honored duty of our seats of Higher Learning. But when I come to the second part of my symphony and hear the fiddles intone the first notes of the *scherzo*, I can once more beam upon my audience with gratitude and pleasure. When all is said and done, youth is so terribly strong, so vibrant with life and the desire to exist and to enjoy, that the most morose of pedagogues cannot quite kill the happiness of a spot like this where four thousand young men have come together on top of one of the loveliest hills in Christendom to disport themselves in their own sweet fashion without any very tangible responsibilities.

## V

By nature of my profession I am obliged to sit in many a solemn meeting where the grave problems of education are being discussed. Invariably Gloom is the *leitmotiv* of the gathering. I hold my tongue and draw pictures upon any convenient scrap of paper and invariably I think of certain stories in the daily press. Open any news-sheet at random and make for the agony column

of Europe. Therein the patient reader is told of the desperate straits of Italy or Spain, of Lithuania or Buffoonia-on-the-Baltic. The respective budgets of these distant lands are explained. The inevitable deficits are shown in all the gruesome nakedness of a horribly deflated currency.

Famous professors of *Economia Politica* duly interviewed by the gentlemen of the Press then step forward to draw the inevitable conclusions and they depict a country where a shivering humanity dejectedly awaits the hour of doom or hastens from the breadline of the kindly Quakers to the soup-line of the not less kindly Mr. Hoover. But when our own friends return from these distant neighborhoods after a pleasant summer of profitable holidaying, they inform us that life seems to continue very much as life has continued ever since the original cell began to disport itself in the original ooze. It is true that people of Austria and Bavaria and Lithuania wear old and shabby clothes and that shoes and stockings are rare luxuries. But there seems to be a certain amount of laughter, of happiness, and a total absence of a Jobean pose.

If the population of the aforementioned countries is doomed to live in hovels and amid the ruins, they at least have made up their minds that they are going to be cheerful paupers. They drink a mean wine when the better sort has been bought up by the profiteers from London and Paris. They play their tunes upon cheap little Mittenwald fiddles when the ancestral Stradivarius has been acquired by the buyer of Mr. John Wanamaker and has become an object of the daily literary rhapsody of that stern moralist of Philadelphia and New York. They shiver in their cold rooms, but they embrace their lady-love as warmly as if they dwelt in a steam-heated flat.

In short, life has proved so strong that it has defeated hunger and cold and the hollow despair of economic and political collapse. The same is true of the Cornell undergraduates. While we

worry about the apparent collapse of scholarship they, the undergraduates, live in a world of their own and the doings and undoings of a thousand professors with a thousand little intellectual mops are not going to influence their happiness by one single iota.

Once they have left the strangely ramshackle surroundings of the railroad stations, have paid their eight cents into the coffers of the street-car company, have become accustomed to the rhythmic click of car 47's ancient and time-honored flat wheel, they enter into a kingdom which is theirs by the sheer exuberance of youth. Farther and farther the car speeds away from the Lehigh and the Lackawanna, leaving behind the respectable homes of Ithaca's respectable citizenry and rolling merrily through the inconsequential Main Street of this city of two tales, which was going to be a mighty shipping point for lake traffic and by the irony of fate grew into a mere background for a university.

Higher and higher up the hill the car carries them (if the trolley and the juice stay faithful)—past the old home of the wise founder of this school "where all men ought to be able to learn whatever is of interest and profit to them." It plunges into the outer zone of the East Hill boarding-houses (where the proletariat from New York's less fortunate avenues gathers) and then suddenly the top of the hill is reached and the town of Ithaca is as far distant as the mountains of the moon. Indeed, a Cornellian, were he so inclined, could spend his entire four years on top of the hill without ever descending into this vale of haberdashery (with long term credit), Greek candy, churches that look like banks and banks that look like churches, widely famous as the commercial centre and ancient forum of Tompkins County.

Of course, there are a few disadvantages connected with a continuous and uninterrupted residence on the hill. A certain minimum of hours has to be passed with a fair degree of success lest the dreadful letter containing the "con-

silium abeundi," viz., the "bust-notice," drive away another fallen angel from his temporary heaven. But, provided this minimum of effort is sacrificed upon the altar of duty, the rest is plain sailing or skating or tobogganning or rowing or cross-country running or whatever happens to be nearest to the heart of the lucky dog who has been turned loose into these Elysian fields of undergraduate happiness.

It is true that the weather is somewhat harsh. In summer the sun is likely to turn the asphalt into a semblance of unleavened dough. Often during the winter does a lusty wind, which bloweth high above Cayuga's icy waters, make one wish for a third layer of mackinaw and leather waistcoat. But these are mere climatological details. There is a long autumn of wondrous beauty. There is the spring, when the most lowly of town girls assumes the estate of Heloise or Beatrice. But, best of all, there is at all times the feeling of complete and untrammelled freedom.

The spirit of that great old man, Ezra Cornell, now so peacefully asleep in the marble sarcophagus of that little chapel which he shares with his chief advisers and generals in the glorious battle upon sectarianism and militant Methodism, that spirit of understanding liberalism has survived all attempts at destruction. Ezra was a Quaker, we are told. Perhaps so. But he was a Quaker who had mysteriously partaken of the pagan doctrine which insists that man, in order to be truly happy, shall find salvation after his own will. He gathered around him a group of scholars whose very names became synonymous with freedom of intellectual action. None of them survives, but their work goes on.

In the heart of the Campus stands this college chapel. Like its counterpart in Ferney, it is dedicated to no special saints, but only to the worship of a kindly God. It offers the hospitality of

its pulpit to preachers of every denomination. It has elevated Florence Nightingale to sainthood and has steadfastly declined to reduce religion to an Incorporated Company with preferred shareholders and deferred dividends. It is flanked by a semi-official branch of the inevitable Y. M. C. A. The irrepressible worthies who guide its destinies have managed to degrade the University by an occasional visitation from the Rev. Dr. Billy Sunday and his like. But these sporadic efforts at millenniumizing have come and have gone like the measles or chicken pox, and no one has been any the worse for the trumpeting of Brother Rodeheaver's fanfaronous trombone. And the undergraduate body goes the even tenor of its days and reveres God in His wondrous work of mountain and lake and high, storm-swept sky.

Half a century ago Cornell was a dangerous experiment, regarded with suspicion by the good people of the East as a wicked adventure into the realm of irresponsible science and dangerous social experiment. To refer to those early days seems to recall a past as remote as the great Lutheran controversy of the sixteenth century. The enthusiasm of that early period of struggle and despair and final triumph was overtaken by the eager and noisy zeal of the preachers of the great industrial era. Cornell, from being an advance post in an indifferent cultural territory, fell a victim to the enemy and became a bulwark of practical efficiency.

The old "school" of Ezra grew into the unwieldy "plant" that covers untold square miles of territory. It would be unfair to draw a moral or to preach a lesson. After diligent and due search, a leader has been found to assume this heritage of hope and promise.

The future of a great idea is in the hands of a new man.

Lord help us, we don't envy him his job!



# A Short History of Jacob Small

*By William Seagle*

HE had never been able to swim a stroke. But one evening he attended a lecture on hygiene in the neighboring Y. M. C. A. building that was equipped with a splendid pool. The lecturer impressed it upon him that inability to swim had cost many a man his life. Thereupon, he made a resolution to learn the difficult art and, applying himself for several months, became very expert. One fine summer afternoon he went bathing on the beach. Becoming enamored of his skill, he swam beyond the life-lines, got the cramps, and drowned thoroughly.



THERE are two basic trends of philosophy in the United States. The people who wonder where all the booze is coming from and the people who wonder where it is all going to.



THE first time a man is fooled by a woman, he feels like shooting himself. The next time he feels like kicking himself.



YOUTH is a fire and the years are a pack of wolves who grow bolder as the fire dies down.



A MONG themselves, men compare notes. Women, husbands.



# Ania Zinina

By Augustin Booth

## I

A PASSER-BY wishing to go from Shaftesbury Avenue to the British Museum would have to walk through narrow streets—part of the maze of Georgian houses which made up in the past the original Bloomsbury quarter of London, and now remains a few blocks of closely-built houses, cube-shaped, for the most part dingy and neglected, hiding from the ever advancing motor-filled thoroughfares of newer times. Were he to venture into the first, the other end of which was barred by the stern outline of the Museum, and keep to the left side, he would see at the entrance of a narrow passage a board set in an angle of the wall, and on it in large letters "*Academy of Dancing—Ania Zinina, of the Imperial Theatre of Petrograd and the Royal Opera, Covent Garden.*"

Should he know Madame Ania Zinina, and therefore wish to call on her, there was some length of narrow passage between walls black with soot and damp; then, on his right, a door with a brass handled bell-ringer which, if pulled hard enough, would tinkle with a sound faint and rheumatic. The door would open and a maid—making desperate attacks with her right arm on her dishevelled hair—would introduce him through a double curtain into a large room, lighted by two bay windows at one end and a glass dome overhead. There were tall mirrors along both walls, the one facing him and the one at the back. A round wooden bar

stood out from these, on iron supports let into the wall, about the height of a man's leg; there was a fireplace between the bay windows, with a settee and accompanying stools.

Out of a side room at the farther end, also hidden by curtains, a shrill high-pitched voice would greet him in English but with a distinctly foreign accent—a voice that pleased, for it trailed on notes of singing quality. He would be invited to come in—there was no lesson for a half-hour, and then it was only the smaller children's class. Would he have some tea? English tea, of course! And a tall woman would stand up in the semi-darkness (for all the windows were heavily curtained except those in the studio) and come forward with effusive warmth—always supposing he was an old friend of the family, for Madame Ania Zinina acknowledged a daughter who was married, also a dancer, and who helped to teach in the Academy. She had black hair, a jet black, not quite natural; her eyes were dark and luminous while her mouth could hardly be described. It so constantly registered passing moods, wilful and impassioned—but its most constant feature was a certain lifting of the upper lip, suggestive of deep schooling in the defensive superciliousness of salon life. She was tall, with a magnificent neck and fine shapely rhythm to every limb in spite of age. Her legs and feet had once been declared by Continental *roués* as the finest and most admired of her time.



She had been very famous—Madame Ania Zinina. In the two volumes wherein were pasted the many articles praising her performances, were photographs of herself in eastern beaded attachments—for they could not be called clothes—where she stood superb, a finely bodied woman. She had created the principal rôles in the new school of ballet writing, which had burst the bonds of the all-powerful conventional of the Italian school of dancing and given the Russian genius its freedom in the early nineties.

While talking and leaning back on her divan, as Madame Récamier must have done for David to paint her, with a cigarette, her constant friend, between her fingers, Madame Ania Zinina would describe those great days from before the Russian Revolution of 1916.

She then possessed two country estates—the châteaux “d’après Versailles”—racing horses—wealth and admiration. In nearly every capital city she had danced before the crowned heads of Europe. What a clever man her impresario had been! In Budapest the show-windows of one of the largest jewelers of the town had been left bare, save for a notice informing the public that, on the day of her first appearance in the town, the jewels of *la prima ballerina*, Madame Ania Zinina, would be exhibited. When that day came, the notice had been replaced by another, regretting the impossibility of exhibiting, owing to the Insurance Company’s veto, for the jewelry of Madame Ania Zinina was much too valuable to risk being shown behind plate-glass in the street. At this, the heroine of the event would interrupt her reminiscences and laughingly explain that her jewels had not been half as valuable as all that, but it was a wonderful advertisement.

When she agreed to dine in the public restaurant of the hotel where she was staying, the manager was instructed to make of her table a bed of

white flowers, with a card giving the time when “*la merveilleuse danseuse*” would take her meal. How they would stand and crane their necks when, into the blaze of the lighted hall, she would come, preceded by the bowing manager—with a long-trained glittering dress, waving a fan of the rarest white ostrich feathers—a gift from Count Titzza, her then admirer *attitré*. Beside her, holding her hand high, severe and dignified, walked Falkirch, her impresario, a regular watchhound, with his black beard and shaggy eyebrows. She wished she could have him now! But the war had come—he was an Austrian—and they were all pieces of wreckage, thrown up on foreign shores.

Yet London was not altogether strange to her. She had danced at Covent Garden before King Edward the Seventh, and after the performance he had come to her dressing-room and had been most charming. Ah, those days! And now she had this school of dancing, hard, ungrateful work. English girls were not so bad—but their mothers! And here Madame Ania Zinina would lift both her arms high and profoundly shake her tiny head. They were “*très difficile*.”

## II

MADAME ANIA ZININA had twice been married. Her first husband, Count Serge Kapoustin, was at that time a tall, handsome officer in the Cavalier Guards. She was then seventeen and *première danseuse* in the Imperial Ballet, much courted and sought after, for her parents were wealthy and aristocratic. She remembered him as a man of great violence, rich and powerful, and once he had her for his wife he insisted on her continuing her profession, while he filled the town with the scandals of his *amours*.

Later had come the Russo-Japanese war. She was then older and, as Countess Kapoustin, had fol-



lowed the armies to tend the wounded. Her husband, who had some time before resigned his commission, was given charge of an Ambulance train and convoy, the funds for which had been raised by charitable performances. She remembered the interminable journeys across the Siberian plains—the cold when the water froze, when even the steam pipes were useless. How the wounded often lay, their bodies blue and their hands and feet paralyzed, with a temperature well below freezing point,—the nurses rushing round to rub their noses with snow, while she—she was always warm in her special compartment. Her husband insisted on the soldiers heating red-bricks for her bed in the fires they made beside the line, when the train stopped toward evening.

There was one memory forever vivid: An encampment beside the single line of the Trans-Siberian Railway, with its sentries, silent, frigid figures, at equal distances, till mere specks on the dull outline of those level plains. They were near Mukden and not far from where they stood the river of Liao-ho stretched its lazy current toward the gulf of Liaotung—there where they were fighting desperately for the saving of Port Arthur.

It was night; she had retired to her tent. Outside, round a bonfire—red and fierce in the opaque darkness—for the moon had retired behind the faint outline of the great Khingan mountains—her husband sat with other officers. They were drinking vodka while the band of a regiment nearby stood at a respectful distance and played national airs. They had played ever since night had come, and would play till ready to drop from fatigue, while their officers sang, shouted and rioted. For Death was near by—Life was short and it was good to drink.

She had fallen asleep, dead with fatigue, when suddenly she awoke with a start. A tall man stood in the

V-shaped entrance of her tent. She could see him owing to the fitful glare of the fire, which was now dying out behind him. He seemed uncertain on his feet and was shouting to people outside to come up. It was her husband. As other figures came up, yelling and staggering, he fell on his knees, calling on his friends to do likewise and, while the band played the *Boje Baria Chronicle*, he lifted up both his hands, called her his joy—his star—ordered her to come out so that they might do obeisance to her.

She hastily wrapped herself in the great white cloak worn by Russian nurses, and came to the entrance of the tent, a frail white figure with a great red cross, which stretched to her knees, clearly visible in the light of the fire. Pale and frightened she stood, with sleep-filled eyes, while her husband bent to the ground and kissed her feet, where they showed, soft and warm, above the sheep's wool of her slippers. And the other officers yelled with drunken voices, thinking of women thousands of miles away, while behind them, paling the red embers of the fire, the first pallor of approaching dawn made visible the men who lay, far out on the plains, in huddled groups round their stacked rifles.

She had divorced him and, shortly after, had married Vladimir Bikoff, who held an appointment at the Czar's court. He was not a pure Russian, had Scotch blood in his veins. In spite of his bullet head with close-cropped reddish hair, he was a handsome man—so testified his constant successes with the fair sex.

He loved Ania—not in the queer mad drunken bouts of his predecessor, but with an intensity and jealousy which would insist coldly and cruelly on the utmost proofs of her devotion. He would think out and make her give the most abject demonstrations to prove her love, and yet cared nowise in how much he deceived her. She had left her much-loved profession to appear at Court,

and always looked a queen in the part. But the attraction of the footlights had been too great; she had burst her bonds and toured different countries—a beautiful woman and a great artist, disdainful of the homage of palsied aristocrats and moneyed bankers—old age that offered its wealth for but a moment spent esoterically in her society.

But the war of 1914 had come—then the revolution in her home country. Her estates had been pillaged and burnt to the ground. Her last husband was “somewhere” vaguely—she had heard in Madrid. Whether she was a married woman or not seemed to matter little—he cared less. Her savings had sunk to nil in the *débâcle* of the exchange, and now she struggled all day—to teach—to teach—and mothers did not pay willingly.

But she had managed in spite of the seemingly concerted ill-will of those around her. Her daughter was married, but she—she was lonely. So often she felt an overwhelming listlessness, everything the color of those soupy fogs of London. Of an evening, she would sit and stare at the impassive Buddha—all golden—that sat immutable on his throne, wherein offerings and supplications could be placed by opening the lid in front. She had bought him somewhere in Chelsea, and he now looked down at her between the slits of his eyes—up above her bed—against the walls, black-draped. An immense lassitude would take hold of her. She had throbbing sensations which left her faint and weak. Often while out with Ivan Petrof or others from the Russian refugee colony, she found herself looking round at the men she saw—looking, yet half afraid, for one who would look back and perhaps give her again her sense of living.

Then came Ernest J. Morely.

Ivan Petrof had brought him to one of her Sunday afternoons. She had noticed a quiet, well-dressed Englishman who had bowed stiffly, then

looked at her—at first with curiosity—as a foreigner and a woman who was much talked about, whose photographs had often appeared in the illustrated papers, as a great Russian dancer who had given charity performances for the wounded—who had produced the ballet “Before the Dawn” at the Empire, the season’s sensation, who had made large sums for Lady Eldermere’s fund for the poor wounded horses of the war. He had remained longer than is usual on such occasions, and bending over her—as the candles were being brought in and the other guests were departing—had flirted with her, looked into her eyes and asked for the pleasure of seeing her again.

That night, before going to bed, Ania wrote something on a piece of paper slowly; then, after carefully folding it up and sealing it with a black seal whereon she pressed her crest, she placed it inside the throne of the golden Buddha who sat silent and enigmatic against the black curtained walls of her bedroom.

### III

ERNEST J. MORELY was known to many as a man about town; that is, what had begun to be called such during and after the great European war. A man always well-dressed, who had a suite at the Piccadilly Hotel and was seen at all the bars in and around the West End and was bowed to familiarly at several fashionable night clubs. He was head of the firm bearing his name, whose expensively furnished showrooms had been opened in Bond Street during the second year of the war. Most mornings during the summer, his car would be brought round to the entrance of the hotel and—several hours late—for Molly never knew what time was and Kitty always had a thick-head from the night before—he would drive off, telling them to keep quiet in the back of the car, for he could not hear himself speak to

Jack, who sat beside him—and spend the day at Maidenhead with cocktails, jazz-bands, chorus girls and gayly cushioned canoes.

He went to races but rarely won anything. He did not like it very much. His friends always seemed to win, while he never had the pleasure of announcing at the dinners he gave that he had won a clean "thou," to companions already warmed with their fifth cocktail and on whom sentiment was thrust with Indian lyrics, operatic airs and syncopation played deafeningly and expensively by a three-hundred pounds a week orchestra.

Since making his money and once the war over, Morely made journeys abroad with Molly of the late hours and Kitty of the "mornings after" and Jack. They had taken the Rolls and had visited many places, making sure of up-to-date hotels. Later he had gone to Paris alone. He had remained there two weeks, spending many thousands of francs (of course a mere trifle, considering the exchange) buying dresses for a woman met at a much advertised Paris night-haunt, who was utterly unable to wear them to advantage. It was his luck to meet a rare Parisian who could not wear her clothes, had no mind to them and, therefore, quite naturally, had nothing to say. This was a typical case with Morely for, unfortunately, the land of wealth has no sign-boards at its many cross-roads to guide the strangers who have gained entrance therein.

There was a Mrs. J. Morely, but earlier there had come into her life a man who had talked with poise and knowledge of the people one always longs to know—spoke of them intimately and even claimed some as relatives, even those who wear top hats, white spats and morning dress along Rotten Row during the Spring season! She had left her husband for the time being, and life had become very gay and very romantic. But she had suddenly found herself alone, and

now she spoke with authority on marital duty, on fatherly love to the two children, and often complained that her allowance was barely sufficient.

Morely had hesitated. He had talked on the telephone once or twice to his solicitor, then had forgotten the matter—there was so much to do and nights were very gay, so matters were left to drift till it became too late to start divorce proceedings. Sometimes he consulted his friends on his responsibilities to his wife—after all she *was* his wife—and his children, so he increased her allowance and intimated his desire that she should live with her parents at Streatham where they had a small villa called "The Matterhorn."

It was in 1920, two years after the end of the war, that Morely had been brought by Ivan Petrof, whom he had known in business, to the studio of Madame Ania Zinina.

Petrof had often spoken of that great lady. He had first known her at Moscow; the town was at her feet—"We fought for invitations to her receptions. She was the most beautiful and accomplished of Russia's artists."

And Morely was not disappointed, except that he found her older than he had imagined. But what charm of manner—what conversation never at a loss for the right gesture and the right word. And henceforth Morely had become assiduous in his attendance at her studio.

He would come in toward evening, and, if too early, would watch the lessons. Young girls dressed in their ballet costumes would evolve on the tips of their ballet shoes, not always as white as they should be, for this was work. The pale mauve, blues and pinks of those short muslin dresses, which stood out like lampshades, were also soiled. Their movements had something awkward and broken about them. They were at that stage where the woman is not a woman yet. She is half out of

girlhood—half a boy; she is thin, bony, but yet delightful, with all that strangeness of promise—and Morely found it amusing to watch them as they worked their straight thin limbs around on the horizontal bar, countlessly repeated in the mirrored walls. The lesson over, Madame would make a hasty toilette and they would go out to dine at some quiet place—for Ania was tired and she wanted to dine with him alone—talk to him alone—interest him and amuse him.

Soon Morely found himself spending every evening with Madame Zinina—or Ania, as he had begun to call her. He felt Ania wanted to see him and was upset if he did not arrange to be with her the next day—and the next.

Then came the night when Morely left the studio at the early dawn. Ania ran to her Buddha, and climbing up to it on the sofa, took out the small note of paper she had placed there, kissed it tenderly, broke the seal, added a few words, sealed it again and replaced it where it was before, after which, for a long time, she stood letting her hand rest above her, at the feet of the Golden Buddha, and half-turning round, watched the dying embers of the fire, her eyes full of dreams.

#### IV

DAYS passed by—days full of one burning tender thought for Ania—but not so for Morely, for things were not going well with his business in Bond Street. The artificial prosperity created by the war was ebbing. The stimulus of organized output and consumption had gone with the war. Men were beginning to feel the penalty inevitable to victor and vanquished alike, of that orgy of nationalism indulged in with no care for life or property. He had always meant to sell and sell well. Only the year before, a munition maker had come to him and practically begged him to accept a much exaggerated price for his business—for there was

the super tax and it could be avoided by so-called investments. But, hoping for a still greater offer, he had refused; now he regretted for he knew he must sell and sell immediately.

He realized the changed conditions as yet vaguely, for the business men were still encouraged by the inspired optimism of the newspapers and the periodical promise of conferences which would settle every outstanding problem in the gathering storm—would settle them beautifully to the satisfaction of all. So he told those around him that he wanted to start a new concern, and he sold his business. The terms were not as advantageous as he had anticipated, but he had other schemes in view, and he would be paid a quarter of the sum down and the rest in half yearly instalments.

He still lived at the Piccadilly but was now entirely absorbed in Ania, for he found her sympathetic and bracing. He would talk to her as they sat beside the fire of an evening, he on a stool, she on a black-draped arm-chair, and he would lean his cheek close to her while she stroked his hair and was tender. He also spoke to her of his wife—how she was the only woman and would remain the only woman for whom he had felt as he had. He spoke about her a great deal; so much so that Ania would sometimes wonder, before her dressing-table, polishing her nails. But she would shrug her shoulders, call to her maid to set to rights a stray curl and say to herself that perhaps this was the way of Englishmen.

The first proceeds of the sale of the business Morely invested with a man called Dudworth, who had been introduced to him a year before at Maidenhead. He did not know the man but the business which he represented was showy and looked important, which filled him with enthusiasm. He felt that he could organize on altogether original lines. Spoke

of catalogues, advertising. He had thousands of copies printed—of the most costly kind—made alterations in the Dudworth establishment which bloated the costs to double their former figures.

He certainly increased business at first. The public are always taken by the *frappant*, the original, but he forgot that he had a jaded public to deal with. A public who had spent the years of the war, and those after, flinging their money to right and left, so as to cheat a crushingly growing taxation. He counted on the next instalment due to him—the time of payment came—it passed—and no payment. He made enquiries, found that the man who had bought his business, apart from the first payment, counted on the proceeds of the business itself to pay—but the business had become exhausted. The premises in Bond Street had been sold—all else was going to meet creditors whom the prestige of Mr. Morely had held back. Henceforth events followed each other without intermission.

Morely left the Piccadilly. He sold his cars for a mere song, but he still dined at the best restaurants, still was seen at his night-club, tipping the waiters so that they bowed with kindly reverence, for habit is hard to break and there was still hope.

He had an injured tone now when he spoke of his troubles to Ania. She would sit and wait for long hours till he came. Then, rushing up to him, both her arms stretched to his shoulders, she would question him. Had this important business appointment been a success? Had the man agreed? Morely would look at the whiteness of her temples, the wrinkles so visible in the light of day, and he would think of the girls he had just left—of their gestures of posed indifferent pride, but yet buyable. He had once been able to buy them! With all their decorous touch-me not maidenliness! There would be a bottle of champagne—

then the *double entente*, the *risqué* story—then. . . . Oh then, the suite, with a few others, of course . . . —then—after the fifth and sixth bottle all round, pajamas would be tried on with lightsome girlish laughter—with poutings at certain male gestures—then. . . . Oh, it was the usual—but how he had loved it—wallowed in it—gloried in possessing these women by his wealth, that power to satisfy their senses—the warmth and glitter of costly surroundings.

And now—it was all past—finished—done with—and he would look again at Ania's pale face—held up to him with none of the pride which had first tempted him to conquer. Divested of all that past of which Petrof had told him, and over which she also had sometimes hovered—but with a gesture of throwing it all at his feet—all his—and how it had then lost its hard glitter. It all now seemed so distant—so unreal. What was real was that she stood beside him, offering herself for him to lean on. And he would lean on her—for he had need of her. He must never go back to what he had been before he had been a rich man. He would keep her—for was she not a prize of his great days?

## V

SHE had offered him money. They were living together now. The Dudworth business was all that was left to him, and there also he had been too confident. The bills for his improvements were coming in; the capital which he had invested had been swallowed up. Clients were scarce and debts were growing daily.

He sat on the bed, his knees apart, dishevelled and bent forward, detailing what he owed in a doleful voice. No, he would not take her money. He would find it somehow. Then he would kiss her hands and cling to her—and this at twelve o'clock, for he got up very late now. He would stay in bed for hours, bemoaning his



fate. Ania would bring him some tea, make his bath for him—sometimes she would get up in the middle of the night to do so, for he could not sleep. And she would reason with him. There was the Dudworth business! He must work!

After meandering about her rooms, those at the back of her studio, he would phone to his typist, give a few instructions, then sit in the studio for hours on end, watching her give her lessons, and, between times, come up and fondle her.

His personal creditors were growing restive; proceedings were threatened. One evening Ania put money in an envelope and left it for him. When she came in, the envelope was gone. Morely said nothing to her about it.

Next day she thought he looked rather uncomfortable as he went out with more than his usual alacrity. Since then he had taken the money she gave him without much opposition. It was, of course, a loan. He would give it back to her, every penny. She need not be afraid, he would pay her 10% interest and . . . but she had interrupted him. She was very angry!

She stood above him, her head erect. How could he suggest anything so base, so sordid? And as she spoke, his eyes wavered, he shambled to one side and the other uncertainly. Uncertain? Weak? And she remembered, with a queer sickly sensation, waiting for him the day before in the lounge of the C. Hotel. How he had come in an hour late and in the hall had walked rather bent, his face sideways, with a nervous smile, with something slouchy in his walk, and she felt disdain.

But no, the man had all against him, his luck was out. When one thing goes wrong everything else goes at the same time. She would not judge him, and she felt again a wave of sympathy. Surely she could inspire him to fight, to struggle. She who knew what fighting and strug-

gling meant—the eternal lessons—the harsh pianist—and the stupid children. Poor mites! She loved them all! It was not their fault—if only there were no mothers!

The Sunday after, when Ivan Petrof came to see her, Ania was alone, as she was often now. He sat opposite to her; she liked him, not only for the memories he possessed of her, but he was a fine breezy man, Ivan Petrof. She loved to see him sit there opposite to her divan, on a stool with his hands firmly placed on both his knees, the elbows akimbo. Slightly bent forward, he would smile at her, a broad smile which showed full red lips and white teeth from behind his square black beard.

"Yes, Anishka, you look tired—pale. How is Morely? I saw him at the D. Club the other night. He was with that girl—that girl who made such a hit in the operetta newly imported from New York. By the way, I might as well tell you, for have you not so often spoken to me about his wife. I met her the other day. She told me that Morely's business must be looking up, for he bought her a dress, one she had been coveting for a long time."

Petroff said much more, discussing all the topics one talks about of a Sunday afternoon to an old friend, but Ania hardly heard. Mechanically, and by sheer force of habit, she poured out the tea, and when Morely came in, just in time to shake Petroff's hand, received him looking as usual.

Bought his wife a dress—and it was she, Ania, who had lent him the money, all he had—for the Dudworth business was dead and there were no Director's fees. As for his invested capital—Morely had spoken to Dudworth, the latter had shrugged his shoulders, had merely pointed out that he was down at the office every morning at 9 a. m., and only left at 6 p. m. He had begun to say more, but, looking at his partner, had shut

his mouth with a snap and hastily walked away.

When Petrof had gone, Morely, after seeing him to the outer door, walked back across the studio and, without looking at Ania, said that he had an important business engagement and must dress. It was growing dark but Ania did not ring for the servant to light up. She remained where Petrof had left her, waiting—palely visible in the gathering gloom.

Morely came out of his room, dressed, and, seeing Ania on the couch, went up to her; going on his knees, he kissed her hands and face, saying how much he loved her—how good she was. He fondled her hands and said he was miserable, his luck was cruel.

Then quietly, Ania asked him why he had bought his wife a dress. It was Petrof who had told her. Why had he done so when he needed every penny in order to get on his feet again? He answered that his wife had asked him for that dress.

"I was out with her and we passed a shop. She begged me so, saying it was a bargain and she would never have such an opportunity again. But never mind, little woman, it will be all right. My business is sure to recover and you will have your money back, every penny of it."

He had gone.

It was past midnight when the servant, growing anxious, had gone into her mistress' boudoir and found her sitting, staring into the fireplace wherein lay only cold ashes.

## VI

NEXT morning there came a telegram for Morely. It had been sent round from the office. Morely had made several efforts to go back to work but—well—things were too bad and he needed Ania to comfort him. He opened the telegram. It was from Justine; he had not told her about Justine! He was beginning to explain when Ania stopped him,

putting her hand on his mouth. No, she would not know; she did not want to know who and what Justine was. Yes, he could meet her—she did not mind—not a bit—she was quite certain—this while Morely knelt to her and kissed her hands, softly crooning words of endearment.

That evening Ania was dressing—she expected Morely back to dinner. She had thought of him all day. Her mind had grown numb with picturing him—all he had said and done ever since that first day. She had questioned herself as to what she felt, but had come to no conclusion. There was something the matter with her—her mind and feelings were so numb. They seemed frozen up somewhere right in the innermost caverns of her being. But she knew her few hard-won savings were exhausted. She had lent money before—money which had never been returned. Her cousin, that handsome, brilliant and unrestrainable talker, Prince Shemerskoff had borrowed thousands—and even sold many of her finest jewels, and yet she felt no irritation against him.

But it was different with Morely. Why was it—that dull sense of injury against Morely who, after all, was honest and meant well, while her cousin, an arch rogue—she warmed to him as she did toward her two husbands. She could still see him in her mind's eye—Prince Shemerskoff. A tall, powerfully built man, with dark impenetrable eyes, domed forehead and unquenchable exuberance; an imagination as large as himself, and his little faint-voiced wife whose fortune he had eaten to the last kopek. She looked at herself in the mirror. Still beautiful! She loved this white evening dress, with its glitter of silver and its ornaments of vivid green and red—it had the soul of the country she loved. That turban round her black hair—also green and red. She put on her pearls and on her fingers rings of curiously worked silver, studded with diamonds, oval-shaped—the only remaining presents from

those two men who had each been her husband.

There was a ring at the door. Ernest, surely? No—the maid announced a lady who spoke only a few broken words of English. She asked for Mr. Morely. She was in the studio beside the fire.

Ania went out to meet her. Straightway she put her at her ease; French was quite familiar to her. Would she sit down! What could she do for her? It was Justine Perlande. She had been met at the station by Mr. Morely; they had lunched together and also tea'd; then he had gone, pleading an appointment; she had pressed to see him again, for she wanted so much to see him. It was impossible to talk in those public places. And she had not seen him again! She had phoned to his office for his private address; she hoped Madame, his Mother, did not mind her coming here.

Ania saw that the girl was not herself; she was overwrought and must have drunk just a little too much in order to steady herself. She was short and frail; not beautiful, her features being too irregular, but she had the charm of the Parisian. A little too smart in her clothes, with a suggestion of the *mannequin*, but what Ania saw most of all was the unnatural red of her cheeks, high at the bone—the red of those whose lungs are going rapidly. She begged her guest to remain to dinner; she was expecting Morely any moment.

They were already seated and had finished the first course when Morely came in. On seeing Justine he gave a start and, after looking at Ania, said nothing, greeted them both with hurried warmth—then sat down. Very little was said during the meal but Ania noticed that Justine drank a great deal of the wine and that her hand shook slightly while she drank.

"I met him first at Nice"—this was when they were back in the studio and Justine, looking more excited than ever, was leaning over toward her hostess.

"Oh, but dear Madame, he treated me badly. I never had asked him for a penny, only once, when I had left him, for you know, Madame, that we have got to live. I had given up my man for him; I was glad to do it. I did not want money—it was love I wanted, and, indeed, *chère Madame*, I loved him."

Morely, who looked very uncomfortable, shifted about on his chair. At last he interrupted in a low voice, and in English. . . . This was too much—he could not stand it any longer—would Ania send her away—and, looking round helplessly, he had hastily gone into the inner room.

"When I saw him again today," Justine continued, keeping her eyes fixed on Ania, "I had to see him again before going back. He said he did not want to see me, but I could not help it."

"The reason why I left him? I may be what I am, but, Madame, I loved him, and what woman could stand seeing other women made love to in front of her—other girls. They were English. I did not know a word of English—young girls, but even such a woman as I am, I would not have behaved as they did. He caressed them cynically, and they laughed, dangled their legs while sitting on his knees and returned his caresses; they touched him and played with him. I left him much later on, it is true, for a woman who loves—" and she shrugged her shoulders. "Naturally I was penniless. When I got to Paris I telegraphed him for three hundred francs. He never sent them."

Ania listened. She sat upright, her hands clasping the arms of her chair, and she felt her hearing must have become unnaturally distinct for, at the same time, she heard everything Morely did in the next room. He seemed to wander about aimlessly and twice had come up to the door, hesitated a moment—then gone back.

It seemed an endless time before Morely heard Ania call him. He came into the studio. Justine was saying good-bye with profuse expressions of kindly feelings to Ania, who sat very straight in her white dress, bowing her

head a little, with just the faintest indrawing of her lips—a smile to her departing guest. He hurried Justine out and without a word, not even of good-bye, saw her into a taxi.

When he came back to the studio, Ania was sitting just as he had left her. He shut the door behind him, then came forward. She sat so still, she was not looking at him. Her eyes, which looked unnaturally large and black (was it that she was pale?) looked behind him, but quietly, restfully. He came up to her and, kneeling on both his knees, tried to draw her face down that he might kiss her lips. He murmured that he loved her, that he needed her—that that woman was nothing, she was the past—she, his Ania, would help him. Without a word, Ania hit him—hit him across the face with her arm.

Morely, bringing one leg forward, fell sideways, steadying himself on his hand. Ania saw him—she saw him look astonished, get to his feet. Then, with all her strength, she took with both hands a large old silver jar that stood on the table beside her chair, and threw it at his face. It hit him over the eyes, and he staggered back against the piano. She saw blood—blood streaming down to his mouth—then she hardly knew what she did. She had something in her hand. She rushed up at him—hit him on the forehead with her clenched fist several times. He was raising his arm when suddenly he fell heavily at her feet. She looked down at him while that something fell from her open hand, something sharp and heavy which made a metallic thud, but she did not think of that—she was looking at his face. The mouth was open

just a little, showing the upper teeth, the eyes were closed but for a gleam underneath the eyelid; he was deathly white. There was so much blood on his face.

She cared not. The only thought she had was that he should not come up and fondle her—caress her head, kiss her shoulders. She feared he would. She rushed into the inner room quickly, for fear he should follow her.

"Mayfair 6820—is that you, Ivan Petrof? Oh, I want to speak to Mr. Petrof," and she stood so that she might see the open door and forestall him—should he come to her to kiss and fondle her.

"Ivan, I want to go out and dance with you. Yes, you must be free. There is nothing the matter. No, don't come round. I shall jump into a taxi and be there in a minute."

She got her cloak, came into the studio, stepped over the body that lay, quivering slightly, reached the door—had nearly closed it behind her—when she remembered.

She stepped back, watching Morely carefully as he lay with the light of the fire on him and the blood over his face—got into the inner room, reached up to the Golden Buddha and, taking the carefully folded piece of paper, broke the seal, smoothed it out, read on it its message: of desire and hope for love—for true great love; and the postscript—that it might last to the end of her days.

She laughed loudly as she tore it in pieces and, rushing past the body of the man, which was quite still now, she went out, closing the door and locking it from the outside, for fear he should come after her and touch her.



# The Madhouse at Cairo

[A Fantasy in Dialectics]

By John McClure

THE scene is a madhouse in Cairo. Among the group of fantastics wandering about are PORPHYRY ARSANO and PETRONIUS AMPHAX, very ill at ease.

PETRONIUS

Now that we are completely sober, I see no reason why they should not let us get out.

PORPHYRY

I, neither. It was, in the first place, absurd ever to put us in. It is a slander to say that I wiggled my ears in the market and that I sang bawdy ballads in front of the temple.

PETRONIUS

But, really, that is precisely what you did. I saw it with my own eyes and begged you to cease. I foresaw this—

PORPHYRY

And I suppose you will say that it was not you but somebody else fished with a pin on a string in the basin of holy water? I suppose you will say next it was I and not you that stood in the square and tried to touch his left ear with his tongue? I suppose—

PETRONIUS

Well, at any rate, now that we are sober, they ought to let us get out.

PORPHYRY

They ought, certainly. I am disturbed by these humorous rascals. They are much too intelligent. I can follow them only with difficulty.

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PETRONIUS

They do indeed reflect a weird illumination on the human condition. That one that thinks he is a Thracian bulbul and is perpetually piping, reminds me devilishly of a poet.

PORPHYRY

That one that tries every day to put himself to death and laughs at the keepers when they preserve him strikes my fancy. He is a very shrewd clown.

PETRONIUS

He tried last night to do it by swallowing peach-stones. They were too big.

PORPHYRY

Good morning.

THE SUICIDE

It is indeed a very good morning. The sun is pleasant and the small birds are singing. You are quite right.

PORPHYRY

Eh?

THE SUICIDE

A paradisaical morning, surely.

PORPHYRY

Eh? Then what-a-devil drives you to killing yourself so often, if you find mornings as stupid as this one paradisaical?

THE SUICIDE

Why should I not?

PORPHYRY

My question was prior.



## THE SUICIDE

Very well. I see, then, nothing imperative in a morning. There is nothing obligatory in it which forces me to desire it. It is, as I freely admit, a very good morning. But the best of mornings, you should know very well, are absurd. It is the privilege of an intelligent being, if he please, to abandon an absurdity without explanation. Very well, I kill myself.

## PORPHYRY

You are too acute. But do you not sometimes suspect that in fleeing this absurdity by death you may embrace something even absurder?

## THE SUICIDE

That, indeed, is what I shall find out. That precisely is the spice in the dish of my dissolution. But I doubt very much if anything can be more absurd than mornings and evenings chasing one another to nowhere like a cat in pursuit of its tail.

## PORPHYRY

There is no denying your philosophy, as a philosophy, is eminently correct. It is, in fact, identical with my own. But your practice puzzles me. It is essentially queer. Since I myself am as absurd as Time, we get along handsomely together.

## THE SUICIDE

As you have admitted, you are an inferior intelligence. I am going.

## PETRONIUS

He has stolen a paring knife from the kitchen. I saw it under his robe. He will slit his gullet.

## PORPHYRY

On the contrary. He will make a great noise and they will take the knife from him and he will continue to talk philosophy with an excellent tradition of sincerity to color his words.

*The man that insists he is a gnat approaches.*

## PORPHYRY

Good morning.

S. S.—May—6

## THE GNAT

Ay, ay.

## PORPHYRY

And you are still the midge?

## THE GNAT

If it please you, I am always a midge until I learn of something smaller.

## PETRONIUS

Then you may be one of Anaximander's atoms after this. A midge would make a dozen of them.

## THE GNAT

Ah, I thank you. I am an atom.

## PORPHYRY

If I am not too impertinent, what could ever have driven so portly a man as yourself—and indeed I do not believe my arms could circle your belly—to declare yourself merely a gnat? Is it not, in all reason, the most ridiculous thing in the world?

## THE GNAT

Oh, no! The most ridiculous person in the world is the ass in one of the chambers who thinks he is emperor. A gnat, which is so exceedingly tiny and so unassuming, is, if slightly absurd, still far less absurd than an emperor.

## PORPHYRY

Your philosophy is wretchedly at fault. Your insanity creeps out. A gnat, my fine fellow, is quite as absurd as an emperor.

## THE GNAT

Impossible. Could anything be more amusing than Valerian?

## PORPHYRY

The Emperor Valerian himself, I dare say, would have experienced a droll emotion if he could have foreseen his skin stuffed like a zebra standing in the Persian court for a thousand years, for it is indeed a startling commentary on human glory. But the Emperor Valerian was, of course, an exception.

## THE GNAT

They are all equally funny. We were

talking of emperors. But strutting bakers and cobblers are quite as absurd. A gnat, now, makes no pretensions—

PORPHYRY

You are still at fault in your application of the axiom of absurdity. Absurdity is inherent in being. And you, although only a gnat or a midge or an atom as you contend, are quite as ridiculous as a king in a palace or a cobbler astraddle an ass.

THE GNAT

You are too stupid to follow me.

PETRONIUS

Anyway, if you could shrink to a small enough size to become acquainted with one, I believe you would find there is nothing cockier than a gnat.

THE GNAT

You will not permit me to boast of my lack of importance?

PORPHYRY

We will not permit it.

THE GNAT

Very well. I withdraw.

PORPHYRY

The gods go with you. You are equally droll.

*The man who insists he is a hurdy-gurdy approaches with a great sound of yodelling.*

PORPHYRY

It must be allowed this fellow is very ingenious. Good morning.

THE HURDY-GURDY

Must I cease from angelical harmonies to speak with the like of you?

PORPHYRY

If you please. I should like to learn why the mischief you do this.

THE HURDY-GURDY

I am, as you would know very well if you were not an inferior spirit, immersing myself in the urge.

PORPHYRY

Eh?

THE HURDY-GURDY

The world and the things of the world, as you yourself have insisted in books, are built upon and emerge out of rhythms. Rhythm indeed is the urge of the world. Rhythm, as you know very well, is the shuttle on which we are spun—we planets and stars and mountains and seas, beasts, men and women and fishes. By immersing myself in rhythm, as a hurdy-gurdy, I approach the heart of the mystery. Is that plain?

PORPHYRY

It is as plain as an egg. I cannot admire you sufficiently.

PETRONIUS

You were quite right, in the first place, Arsano. These rascals are much too intelligent. I am unable to follow them.

PORPHYRY

I believe I pursue their conceptions successfully to their conclusions and vaguely perceive what they mean. But, though their points are well taken, I cannot agree with their practice. I should like to get out of here.

PETRONIUS

I must get out or drink more, that is certain.

PORPHYRY

The facetious rogues are too subtle. They will make mountebanks of us if we stay here. To be frank with you, though I blush to admit it, I feel a sudden impulse to spin round and round on my heel like a top so as to attune myself to the seasons.

PETRONIUS

Shall we bolt for it?

PORPHYRY

Yes. Hoist your skirts and we will leap the moat.

*Porphyry Arsano and Petronius Amphax, with their togas flying, dash from the madhouse.*

# Romance

*By Hazel Deyo Batchelor*

## I

EVERY morning at exactly nine o'clock he arrived at his office. At five minutes after nine he was buttoned into his stiffly starched white coat. His glittering instruments were laid out with meticulous care on the adjustable table close to his hand. A pile of freshly laundered towels had been placed nearby ready for use.

When the first patient arrived, which might be at any time from nine-fifteen to nine-thirty, everything went like clockwork. There were the usual preliminaries, the adjusting of the leather chair to exactly the right angle, the comments on the state of the weather, usually by the patient, and the complaints.

He would listen to these with an amazing gravity, making no comments and cutting them off as quickly as possible. The people who came into his office for treatment did not interest him. He did not even see them as individuals. They were so many dollars and cents to him, they solved his economic problem, and in return he did his work thoroughly and well.

Each day he examined the teeth of from fifteen to twenty people. It is doubtful whether he noticed the features of any of these, and certainly he felt no pity for their sufferings. What he felt was a professional contempt for anything that was wrong, an impatience with existing conditions, an urge to give the best that was in him to make a wrong thing right, but no pity.

When he drilled into the cavity of a tooth he saw only the work that was necessary. He was impervious to the wince of pain, the muffled complaint. It

was not that he was heartless, but he was without emotion; he was a machine, executing the most difficult piece of work with a skill and a precision that brought him no thrill of satisfaction. He was confident of his ability to do his work well, and that was all there was to it.

He had no appointment from twelve to one, and it was then that he ate a solitary lunch. Eating was to him the same as anything else. He ate because it was necessary, just as afterward he walked briskly for half an hour, knowing it was necessary to keep his body in good condition.

At five o'clock each day he sterilized his instruments for the last time, put everything away in its accustomed place, took off his crisply starched white coat, which was almost as faultlessly clean as it had been when he had donned it, snapped off the lights in the little office and went home.

When he thought of home he saw, first, Emily his wife. He saw the untidy hair, the droop of the querulous mouth, above which a line of fine hairs was faintly visible, and above all he saw with a little shiver of distaste the conspicuous pores of her face. Her face never seemed to be quite clean, just as the house never seemed to be clean. The tablecloth was always rumpled and soiled, and the bed linen was never quite fresh.

He would not have tolerated in his office what he was forced to put up with in his home, but he had long since realized the folly of protest. It brought down upon his head Emily's tears and reproaches, and it was the same if he attempted to correct the children. Jack

maintained a sullen silence when his father spoke to him, and Irene tearfully appealed to her mother, who never failed to respond. She was their willing slave, although she complained of them constantly.

It was Emily's way to complain, and she resented what she called her husband's "high and mighty" manner, his refusal to be drawn into family squabbles, his apparent remoteness from it all. Emily would have been glad if he had struck back, but the realization that her small stabs made no impression on him maddened her. She was too shallow to realize that he had learned to live within himself, to accept life, to be a machine. It was as though he had memorized a rôle and was letter perfect in it.

But it had not always been that way. There had been a time when emotion had beaten in on him, when a strain of music would stir his pulses vaguely, or the scent of lilac in the spring would send the blood leaping through his veins. That had been long ago, before he had learned to accept life as it was, before he had put his dreams away on a shelf forever.

Almost invariably, as he let himself into the flat, he would be greeted with the warm smell of cooking food wafted through the long dark hall from the kitchen. It was then that he caught his breath and an emotion of sorts surged suddenly through him. This smell of cooking food clogged his nostrils, turned him faintly sick. He had a sensation of drowning, of going down for the last time, and then quite suddenly he ceased to struggle, the atmosphere of the flat permeated him, that momentary feeling of distaste was swallowed up in acceptance, and he was himself again.

And so time slipped away from him, leaving him always oblivious to what was going on about him until one day something happened.

## II

It was late afternoon, and he was alone, bending absorbedly over an intri-

cate piece of bridge work, when the door of his office was opened suddenly and a woman entered. The sound startled him and he dropped an instrument. It was characteristic of him that he stooped mechanically to retrieve it before he looked at the intruder, and as he straightened she spoke.

There were tears in her voice and her words came jerkily.

"My tooth, it's aching frightfully!"

She broke off, the tears had risen to her eyes. They were wide eyes of a smoky gray color, and emotion stirred in him suddenly as he looked into them. Perhaps it was the suddenness of her arrival, perhaps it was the informality of her appeal to him, like that of a terrified child who suffers pain for the first time and does not understand the meaning of it; but he felt emotion, he felt the hurt that she suffered; it shook him tremendously, and he stood for a moment staring at her. Then he was himself again and was telling her with professional brusqueness to take off her hat.

She was in the chair and he was adjusting it to the proper angle. The light from the high-powered bulb overhead shone full on her. Her hair was like fire against the snowy whiteness of the towel he had placed under her head, tears glistened on her straight black lashes. Her complexion was like a child's, dry and finely grained. With a sudden stab of memory he saw Emily, his wife, the fine line of hairs on her upper lip, the coarse pores of her face. His heart leaped suffocatingly, his hands were suddenly shaking. He turned away for a moment, and took an unconscionably long time to find the right instrument, and all the while he was conscious of the girl in the chair, of her suffering; he could not account for his feeling, but it engulfed him, and he was not himself.

Then he was back, he was bending over her, his fingers were touching the velvet of her skin.

"Open your mouth." The words came mechanically. He said them a dozen or more times a day, and their common-

placeness helped to restore him to himself.

With firm, deliberate fingers he found the aching tooth. A passion arose in him to stop the hurt, to take the look of agony from those eyes that were staring straight up into his own. He worked absorbedly, choosing his instruments with calculating care, and all the while he was conscious of her, conscious of her breath that came and went, steaming the tiny, long-handled mirror that he used, conscious of her gleaming hair and her wide gray eyes.

To him she was something delicately constructed and fine. A tiny part of the intricate machinery that went to make her up had gone wrong, and in some miraculous way it had been given him to remedy that wrong. To him there was something almost sacred about it. Even the instruments that he chose seemed consecrated to this task that he had set himself. There was a terrific concentration about his face as he bent over her. His features were set like granite and, although he was so entirely conscious of her, he did not think of her as a woman, it did not occur to him to give her an entity.

When he finally stepped back, that torturing look of pain had vanished from her wide gray eyes. They were placid now, deep pools and very still. The brow was smooth; a slight smile lifted her mouth, which was faintly pink like a child's.

With a quick gesture she gathered the shining masses of her hair under her close-fitting hat. He was not looking at her, but he was conscious of her every move.

She looked at him finally.

"It's stopped aching." The words were those of a gratified child, but he turned away from her, toward his appointment book.

"Can you come tomorrow? I am not finished."

She nodded, and as quickly as she had come she slipped away.

For a moment he stood there, his eyes wandering slowly about the small, square room. It was filled now with a

fragrance as of flowers, and all the ugly professional appointments of the office seemed veiled in glamor. With eyes that hardly saw he looked at the chair where she had sat. Vague dreams stirred in him; the ice about his heart seemed melting.

Almost in a dream he dipped the shining instruments into boiling water, dried them on an immaculate, white towel, snapped off the lights and went home. But the scent of jasmine lingered in his nostrils, and when he let himself into the flat he did not notice the warm smell of cooking food.

### III

HE sat at the dinner table with his thoughts far away. Emily eyed him suspiciously, and once when she spoke to him sharply he started as though she had aroused him from a dream. But when he raised vague eyes to her face he hardly saw her features. A dream face rose between his vision and hovered between them. A white, white face framed in gleaming reddish hair, with wide, gray eyes and the complexion of a child, dry and fine-grained. It was significant that he was alert mentally, that he was thinking, that he was alive. Life at last meant something to him. It was no longer a mere matter of dollars and cents, for he was embarked on a mission, he was athrill with the fire of service. Something was liberated in him and he was no longer locked within himself. His thoughts leaped ahead to the time when he would see her again, and to him she was youth and dreams and illusions and—romance.

He made her a dream woman in his thoughts and queer pictures came and went in his brain. He saw her coming down a wide staircase. Her white hand slipped along the balustrade, and she wore a robe of some glistening white material that rustled softly as it trailed behind her. Her eyes were like stars, and as he knelt before her she came to him and placed her white hand softly upon his shoulder. A feeling of exaltation surged over him. She was



entrusting him with a mission; he had been chosen out of all the others to undertake a sacred trust for her. He rose to his feet, and the wonder of her was almost unbearable—she was like a little white princess, a faint radiance seemed to come from her, and dimly he saw her eyes like stars and the proud lift of her head.

Outside in the courtyard his horse was awaiting him. There was a moon and the scent of roses was everywhere. The gates clanged behind him and he was off. He raised himself in the saddle and looked back. The castle tower loomed dark against a sky gemmed thick with gold, a scarf fluttered from an open window. His heart leaped within him and he urged his horse on. The wind roared in his ears. . . .

"Are you going to sit here mooning all night?" The sharp words pierced his dream and he came to himself with a start.

Emily stood before him with her hands filled with dishes. He stared into her eyes for a minute, and then quite suddenly he smiled. There was an uncanny radiance about that smile that vaguely disturbed her and, muttering something under her breath, she went out and left him alone.

And so in the days that followed he flung the vivid mantle of his awakened imagination around the slim figure of a girl. He never once thought to ask her name or to inquire where she lived. He did not record her visits in his appointment book; the thought never occurred to him; but each time she would arrive late in the afternoon, bringing with her a fragrance as of flowers and filling the ugly little office with an effulgence that for him was like the coming of spring. They did not talk; there were never more than three or four sentences exchanged between them, but her eyes as they looked into his were like stars, and sometimes he fancied that a look of understanding flashed from their depths into his.

Exaltation would surge into his heart. Perhaps she, too, knew about the castle underneath the magic moon

and the clang of the horse's hoofs on the stone of the courtyard, and the scarf floating from the open window. The little white princess! He called her that in his dreams, and certainly he never thought of her in the light of a patient. To him she was a lovely, fragile thing to be touched with reverent fingers, and the work that he gave to her was service—it was a labor of love, and the glory of romance touched the shining instruments with a radiance that was almost unearthly.

At night when he left his office he knew what it was to lift his face to the beauty of the stars. The blood flowed through his veins with tingling assurance. A florist's window, brave with petaled splendor, which hitherto he would have passed with unseeing eyes, now stung him with a sensation of pleasure that was almost pain.

He carried his consciousness with him into the flat, but it was no longer necessary to erect a barricade between himself and the things that were distasteful to him. The atmosphere of the place, Emily's strident voice, the wrangling of the children, no longer hurt him. Only the shell of him was here, for his thoughts were free—free to fly away into the wide realms of beauty.

For three days and three nights he was happy, and then it came as a shock to him on the fourth day that he was finished. He had lived so completely in his dream that, like a dream, it had seemed endless. Now he suddenly realized that there was no longer any reason for prolonging her visits. A sudden agony rose in his heart; he stood before her with all of his soul shining in his eyes, but with his lips tight shut over the words that were rising from his heart. He wanted to say something, he wanted to make her feel what her visits had meant to him, but the words would not come, he was speechless.

Then she spoke.

She was fumbling with a little chain purse that hung from her arm.

"Will you tell me how much I owe you?"

He looked at her then. His dark eyes

looked straight into the wide gray ones upraised to his, and he saw in their depths only faint surprise at his continued silence.

For a moment the realization of her unawareness stabbed him so that he hardly took in the import of her words. Then with a shock he realized that she wanted to pay him. She wanted to give him money for what he had done. The knowledge pierced him through and through; his heart swelled as if it would burst, his throat was dry and hot, he felt a stinging sensation in his eyelids. He had mended the intricate bit of machinery, he had brought her service as a gift, he had given all that was in him; it had been a labor of love, a concentrated holy thing, and she wanted to pay him for it in money!

He stood there dumb before her. Wild thoughts went winging through his brain. His late spring was over and autumn had slipped upon him unaware. The flowers were dying all about him, the blood was running slower in his veins. Through the blur that rose before his eyes he saw her face, the wide gray eyes, the straight black lashes, the complexion like that of a child, dry and fine-grained. It faded to the face of his wife; with sickening clarity he saw her sullen eyes, the fine line of hairs above her querulous mouth, the coarse pores of her skin that somehow never seemed quite clean.

A queer sound rose in his throat and, unconsciously, as though to dispel the vision, he put out his hand. Instantly the girl drew back, a frightened look leaped into her eyes.

He smiled then and she was reassured. She did not see the awfulness of that smile, the sudden twist of the masklike features that was almost like a grimace of pain. With an effort he turned to his desk, made a few calculations on a bit of paper and presented it to her.

He saw her count out the bills, and his heart died within him. She put them down on the desk, but he did not touch them. It seemed as though she hesitated for a moment, as though to say

something, but he did not move. The next moment she was gone. He heard the door close behind her, and the rosy glow in the ugly little office had died away; but there was still an odor as of flowers in the air.

After a time he roused himself. His eyes fell on the bills on his desk and he stared at them vaguely. Dollars and cents, dollars and cents! A pain tore suddenly at his heart and a queer laugh rose in his throat. His hands shook as he reached for the money, but the old habit of self-repression asserted itself almost immediately and a deadly calm swept over him as he locked the bills in the drawer and turned away. With his usual beautiful precision he washed his instruments, wiping them on an immaculate towel. Mechanically he slipped out of his crisp white coat, still almost as clean as it had been when he had donned it that morning, and went home.

But the scent of jasmine was gone from his nostrils when he let himself into the flat, and the warm smell of cooking food surged suddenly through him and turned him faintly sick. He had a sensation of drowning, of going down for the last time, and then quite suddenly he ceased to struggle; the atmosphere of the flat permeated him, that momentary feeling of distaste was swallowed up in acceptance and he was himself again.

#### IV

On the other side of the city, in one of New York's most famous restaurants, a girl faced her companion across a small table. A tiny electric light under a rose-colored shade threw a rosy glow across her face. She had reddish hair and wide gray eyes, and her skin was dry and fine-grained like that of a child. Around her there was a fragrance as of flowers. It was the odor of jasmine perfume and it came from a bottle of precious liquid that sold at retail for eight dollars an ounce.

The man with her was sleek and well-groomed, there was a patent leather lustre to his crisp dark hair, and his

eyes rested on the girl's face with a look of satisfaction.

She smiled at him across the snowy expanse of linen, and remarked over her peach Melba:

"I finished my work with the dentist this afternoon and I'm certainly glad of it. He was the queerest thing: never said a word, and just looked at me with

those big, solemn eyes of his. Gave me the creeps!" And she shivered daintily.

"Fix you up all right?" the man asked laconically.

"Oh, yes," the girl responded, with a little grimace of distaste. "I'll have to give him that much credit. He was a good dentist!"



## Hills

*By Abigail W. Cresson*

YOU give me the valley—  
I asked you for the hill—  
What shall I do here,  
So flat it is and still?

What shall I do  
In little ways like these,  
I, who was meant  
For the wind and the trees?

I who have laid  
My fingers on a star,  
Think I can live  
With the sky so far?

Take me to the hilltop  
And let me find  
My sister, Cedar,  
And my brother, Wind!



MANY a man who imagines himself Don Juan is merely Don Quixote.



# Good Church People

By L. M. Hussey

## I

**H**IS actions were peculiar; he was as furtive as a burglar. He came down the stairs on the tips of his toes, leaning over the banister, peering into the hall.

Reaching the ground floor he parted the hangings of the parlor door, thrust his head into the room, and swept it with an anxious eye. There was no sound in the house, nor any person in the parlor or the hall.

At the foot of the stairs an immense hatrack reared itself enormously like a wooden cyclops standing guard over the sanctuary of the upper floor.

Satisfied by his furtive scrutiny, Baumgartner sat upon the seat of the hatrack with a great sigh escaping from his lips. Outside, the rain poured down in a cascade; the wind rattled the knob of the front door.

Baumgartner thrust a quick hand into his side pocket and withdrew a long, badly-constructed cigar. He bit off the end, spat out the nib, applied a match, and drew in a long puff with the air of a starving man taking food. A poisonous vapor passed up across his face and streamed away, like a veil of gauze, into the hall, up the stairs. Baumgartner, in his sly manner, smiled.

He sat and smoked and in the still air the smoke lay all about him, curled over his face, floated, in asphyxiating strata, above his head. The accumulating vapors seemed too thick and numerous to have issued from a single cigar, and Baumgartner himself, the central figure within this fog, appeared to smolder like a smudge.

The features of his flat face were cast into a mold of pleasure and contentment. His large mouth turned upward in a smile, his sharp little nose sniffed the toxic air as if it were the breath of myrrh and olibanum. He crossed his legs, he tilted back his head, he took his ease in every way.

The cigar was half consumed when the closed door of the dining-room was flung open and Millie's mother stood looking out into the hall. Baumgartner was trapped; he was caught like a boy stealing jam. He stood up, he blushed, he began to stammer.

"Lew!" she exclaimed. "I'm surprised at you! What a dreadful smell! How can I open the windows with the rain pouring down like this! I can't have this sort of thing, Lew. I do everything I can for you and Millie; the good Lord knows I do my duty by you, but I won't have this sort of thing. Take that horrible cigar out to the porch right away, Lew! Yes, I'm honestly surprised at you!"

Her words were given vigor by the indignation of her face, which was glowing and flaming red. The nostrils of her huge nose sniffed like those of a bloodhound, and perspiration filmed her brow.

A vague thought of rebellion came into Baumgartner's harassed spirits, evanescent as a dream. His mother-in-law was unreasonable; her rules were oppressive; he was no more than a slave in a free country!

But, as he faced her, he saw no way to prevail against her. She bulked large in his eye, she was physically huge, a ton of a woman. He found himself fragile, his muscles were flabby.

Moreover, although she oppressed him physically, it was her moral strength he feared the greater; the great and devastating force of her moral indignation. She was a *good woman*! The right was inevitably upon her side, and this inevitable righteousness, that seemed to emanate out of her fat person like rays from a Roentgen tube, enfeebled him and impoverished his courage. The revolt died in his heart. He stammered and blushed and backed to the door.

Outside, the rain beat in upon him, although he crowded back against the door as far as he could. He still puffed at the forbidden cigar, hesitating, from an innate frugality, to throw it away half consumed. But all the sweetness had gone out of the weed, like soured wine, like spoiled fruit.

His thoughts were bitter and dully hopeless, like the thoughts of a prisoner serving a long term in prison. He had not even the satisfaction of a self-justification; he lacked the moral independence to justify himself. He was wrong; he had broken one of the laws. The poisonous smoke gagged him.

Then, as he stood out in the rain, he saw Millie, his wife, turn the corner and in a moment she came up the steps. She closed her umbrella with a snap, throwing water about her like a wet dog. Her hair was damp and clung to her cheeks; her nose was polished like a bit of veneer; her apoplectic eyes bulged out at him in astonishment.

"Lew, what are you doing here?" she demanded.

"Smoking my cigar."

"I'll bet you've been smoking in the house again! Poor mother!"

"Well, I'm willing to smoke on the porch when the weather is decent, but a man can't be expected to wet himself like a drowned poodle on a day like this! Anyhow, I'm here, ain't I? You see me here, don't you? What more do you want? You can't want any more than that, you or your mother!"

Millie closed her eyes, closed her teeth, and blew out her breath with a whistling noise.

"Men are vicious!" she said.

She pushed him aside and went into the house. Baumgartner flung his cigar into the street, and entered after her.

Back in the hall his mother-in-law had already captured her daughter, and his infamy was being elaborated with circumstance. Down the stairs came Millie's elder sister, Gertrude, who bent her ear to the indignant tale of her mother. Baumgartner stood aside to let her pass. As she passed him she turned her face to his own, bestowing upon him a curious, mingled glance of triumph and commiseration.

## II

At an earlier time, for the space of a year or two, a frail little bloom came up into Millie Schwegler's cheeks like the blush of a diffident dawn. Something softened the girl, subdued her angles, diluted her charmlessness with charm. Her voice was pitched lower, her eyes were less bulging, her lips formed little smiles.

Each Sunday, when she went to church, she underwent a new spiritual experience. On the one hand was her mother, on the other sat Gertrude, and she sat between them indulging new emotions. A certain mystery came into religion, a certain enchantment and voluptuousness. The hard doctrine of infant damnation, the sulphurous picture of hell aflame, the presentation of God implacably and eternally executing His vengeance upon the lost no longer stirred her with self-righteous delight, as she had been stirred in her more childish hours. The hard and exulting expression of conscious righteousness that lay like a mask upon the faces of her mother and sister did not show itself in her own features. She felt at peace with the world, even at peace with sinners, and she engaged, with the little powers of her imagination, the mystery of life. Even the pastor, a good man, had his attitudes of mystery.

After the service she shyly watched the men, especially the young men, as they filed out into the aisles. When,



passing through the door, the pastor took her hand, squeezed it, and called her "sister," she blushed, and was vaguely conscious of sin. This small consciousness was secret and sweet.

On week-days she displayed a notable eagerness to do the shopping for her mother. She carried a small basket on her arm, bought the bread, purchased the meat, filled up the empty space with vegetables. In walking on the street she discovered a mysterious pleasure. What she looked forward to, within the secrets of her heart, were the little encounters with men, men in general, anything in trousers. A man suddenly turning the corner, a man eyeing her for an instant in passing, distant and unattainable men descending like princes from sleek automobiles; these instant encounters and impressions of the street enchanted her like high romance. But above all she found her pleasure in the shops, where clever fellows behind the counters waited upon her, joked with her, and sent swift blushes into her cheeks.

Millie, obeying an unreasoning urge, was searching for love.

Her metempsychosis did not escape the eye of her sister. Gertrude, looking back to her own more hopeful time, perceived in Mildred the symptoms of a great expectation that she, in her day, had likewise known.

But she felt no sympathy with Millie. Millie's airs and kittenish ways annoyed her, angered her, and, to appease her irritation, she often stared hard and long at Millie, assuring herself, by these protracted scrutinies, of Millie's small chance of success. The girl was notably bad-looking. The inventory of her pop eyes, rough skin, straggly hair, shiny nose and big hands made Gertrude smile in secret.

But Gertrude knew nothing of Baumgartner, the clerk. Baumgartner was a chief clerk, the head man in one of the stores of a chain grocery—a very agreeable person, popular with the patrons. He was polite to every woman, he was charged, like a voltaic pile, with volubilities, little affable comments,

disquisitions on the humidity, the heat, the cold; he was kind to children, patronizing to dogs, and knew the predilections in coffee and soap of every housewife in his territory.

Millie had seen Baumgartner for years, but now she saw him as through new eyes. He was very ready to talk with her and, although she observed him affable with everyone, there was, she thought, a special affability in his smiles and words to her.

From commonplaces their conversations went to intimacies, in a sweet progression. He told her, small things about himself. He said that the work was hard, the hours too long. She sympathized with him.

One day she entered the store and found him alone there, save for the under-clerk who was weighing out sugar at the rear counter.

"Miss Schwegler," he said, "can't we be better friends?"

Millie's heart leaped into a swifter rhythm and she blushed.

"I mean," he went on, a little confused, "can't we know each other outside the store? Let me take you to a movie some evening; you go to the movies sometimes, don't you?"

They met and sat together before a moving picture, awkwardly silent at first. Mildred's spirits bounded like dancing creatures with a consciousness of great adventure, but her tongue had lost all its words. When they came out, Baumgartner rediscovered some of his garrulity. He talked about himself. He described his life. Millie learned how he lived.

He was a lucky fellow, he said, because there was an unused room above the store, and they gave this to him for his own use. It was his home; he even cooked his meals there.

Millie laughed.

"I'd like to see you cook!" she cried, derisively.

"Oh, I can cook. Some time I'll show you!"

She made no reply, and for several moments she did not hear his further words. She was both shrinking and

expanding, like a flame that leaps and dies, under the spell of a sinful thought. Suppose she took him at his word, visited him in his room! What an outrage, what an adventure! She knew she would never do it.

At last, after knowing each other in secret for a month or two, Millie took Baumgartner home. He met her mother, he met Gertrude. Gertrude was astonished, like one present at a resurrection, or some other miracle. She inventoried Baumgartner, depreciated his high, effeminate voice, his manners at table, his big mouth, his round head, his baggy clothes; yet, in spite of his great deficiencies, she found it incredible that Millie had charmed him.

"He will get tired of her," she said to herself. "She probably throws herself at him like a rubber ball. I'm surprised at my own sister; I did not know she could be so shameless!"

Secretly, she spoke a little, acrimonious prayer to God about Millie.

"Dear Lord," she prayed, "if Millie yields to sin and temptation, be not too severe upon her weakness."

However, Gertrude was very polite to Baumgartner, and Mrs. Schwegler deferred, agreeably, to his superior masculine knowledge.

His ego expanded among these people, like a shy bud unfolding in a special warmth. In the store he was only a clerk; here he was a guest upon whom all eyes were bent. He felt a new importance, a new responsibility. He found that he had been drifting; the bachelor life steered its course toward no goal, nor any port. The limitations of his life distressed him.

Yet, like ghosts, he entertained his doubts. They were the companions of his more weary hours, when he sat in his room, tired from a day's work, but unable to sleep. Sometimes he thought of the unloveliness of Millie, which even his anesthetic eye could apprehend. Again, he doubted Mrs. Schwegler—she was a woman of strong character. He doubted his masculine ability to dominate such a woman, make

himself the veritable head of the house. Already he deferred to some of her prejudices. When entertained at dinner he always took his after-dinner cigar on the porch. How far, living with her, would she try to dominate him?

Eventually his ego prevailed. The notion of being a married man, full of responsibilities and small importances, entranced him. Millie acquired an evanescent allure and he found himself wanting her, regarding her lips and arms. When he ventured his plea she said yes with alacrity. They were married at home.

The neighbors were there, the under-clerk was invited, Millie wore a white dress and a veil, Gertrude played the family piano, the pastor was solemn and impressive. After the ceremony rice was thrown, and a crowd of children hooted and whistled in the street. The police were called to disperse them.

### III

THEREAFTER Millie Baumgartner went into a decline. All that could charm in her had been summoned up, like a meagre host, to do the battle of her uncomprehended urge and necessity. The end was attained; Baumgartner was hers. She felt herself at peace, free to develop her personality.

The real Millie surprised her husband. He was astonished at the swift passing of her kittenish ways, at the failure of her blushes, at the unresponsiveness of her lips. It was as if his eyes had beheld an instant's mirage, or a vague will-o'-the-wisp dancing up for a moment and sinking into the level marshes of everyday, forever.

She began to regulate him severely. She snapped like a terrier when he threw a discarded collar on a chair, or noisily dropped his shoes on the floor. She circumscribed him with rules; she regimented him like a soldier. It seemed to Baumgartner that Millie and her mother entered into an unending conspiracy against all his little freedoms, like autocrats teaching him the

ways of an intolerable domestic tyranny.

Wondering at Millie's change of soul he found no less wonder in her physical decline. She seemed to inflate, to enlarge, to grow progressively dropsical. Her torso expanded like a pumpkin growing in the sun, until, as each day followed the other, she became marvelously like her mother. She wore immense shoes, and loose, shapeless house-dresses. Her hair was combed back tightly, pulling her forehead to a taut membrane, and on each side of her head her uncovered ears stood out shamelessly.

Yet, little by little, Baumgartner learned and accepted the new routine. There was very little revolt in his soul, and scarcely the shadow of a dream. He had never been a dreaming man, wanting in imagination. Only occasionally he wondered a little about his life; wondered by what means it had come to him. He felt, vaguely, that this way of living was not entirely the product of his own volition. Sometimes he perceived in himself a curious helplessness, as if he were the servant of an obscure, impersonal power that measured his days and aligned the events of all his hours.

Every Sunday he went to church with Millie, her mother, and Gertrude. He enjoyed the hour in church; he liked to sing the hymns, through his nose, in a falsetto, like the voice of a parrot. He admired the fluency of their pastor, envying him the number of his words. Sometimes, when sin was denounced from the pulpit, he glanced at his family, saw the hard glare, the uncompromising lines in the faces of his wife, her sister, his mother-in-law, and he endeavored to tighten his mouth and harden his eyes like theirs, with small success. He was too good-natured to hate anyone, even a sinner, but sometimes this weakness troubled him.

Occasionally he was visited with moments of regret. Now and then a pretty girl, a young girl with slim arms and legs and a slender body, coming into his store, aroused an instant picture of

his wife, with her fat middle, her big hands, her rough complexion, her bulging eyes. He felt cheated then, like someone deprived of a fundamental right to draw breath or take food. The business of the store inhibited any development of these moods.

But he was not an unhappy man. He lived like a fish in a certain pond; he traversed the confines of his little waters, knowing nothing of the rivers or the sea.

#### IV

AFTER he had flung his cigar into the street, Baumgartner went up to his room in a sullen mood. For the first time he experienced an acute sense of limitation, and was resentful. He was a man and, theoretically, therefore, the master. He resented the usurpation of his masculine privileges.

Posing himself in the center of the room he faced his imaginary foes. He faced Millie, and the dragon, her mother. His shoulders straightened, his head went back, and his small eyes widened with anger.

"Understand this," he said, in an angry whisper, addressing the two creatures of his fancy. "I'm not going to be bossed around any longer, nor live by any more silly rules. When I want to smoke then I'll smoke; I'll smoke every bloody minute of the day if I feel like it; I'll fill this darned house so full of tobacco smoke that you'll think the whole place is a chimney. The first one that don't like it—bang! out she can go! I'm willing to be considerate, I'm a decent fellow, nobody ever said I was a brute, but I'm not going to be badgered and badgered like a yellow dog every minute of the whole day!"

In the adjoining room a clock struck the hour brazenly, and the metallic clamor of the striking returned Baumgartner to his sense of reality. He looked about him hastily, a little frightened, apprehensive with the thought that someone had observed him.

It was late; he must return to the store.

Millie passed him in the hall and glared at him as he took his hat from the rack.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself," she said.

He did not reply. The sight of her sickened him; her amorphous house-dress flopped about her like the shroud of a resurrected corpse. He went out the front door, and in a momentary incidence of unprecedented courage, he slammed it a little after him.

The rain beat down upon his umbrella like a multitude of small pebbles. He hurried, grimacing, pulling the umbrella down close to his face. Reaching the corner he ran across the street and entered the store puffing like a spent athlete. It was already growing dark; the under-clerk was turning on the lights.

"You can go now," said Baumgartner.

The under-clerk departed and he was alone in the store. It would be three hours before evening closing time, and, with weather of this sort there could be little to do. He sat down back of the counter and began to think.

For the first time since his marriage bitter thoughts were set free in his mind; they tramped through his brain like a morose and vengeful army. He renewed the scenes of his numberless indignities; he recapitulated the rules and laws that limited his ways. A slow indignation welled up in his senses like rising waters. Nothing interrupted his mood, or modified it by the distraction of other concerns; no one came into the store.

He strode up and down behind the counter. The rain beat against the door and drenched the windows. Slender snakes of water ran down from the tops of the windows to disappear across the sills.

Baumgartner looked at the clock. He was surprised to see that several hours had gone by, and now it was nearly closing time. There were, he recalled, two or three boxes of canned goods to be carried down from the store-room upstairs. He turned, mechanically, to

perform his duty, although his mind turned back at once to indignant thoughts.

Ascending the stairs he stood in the store-room, and having emerged from the momentary darkness of the stairs, he blinked like an owl in the sudden light. Boxes were piled up against the walls, extending, like improvised battlements, to the ceiling. At the farther end of the store-room a small door stood partly ajar, and, as if through that door he witnessed within the other room some unexpected scene, Baumgartner stood with his eyes staring, fastened upon it, entirely immobile.

Then he walked slowly down the length of the store-room, and went in through the open door. He turned on the light, looking about him eagerly.

Nothing was changed. The small cot stood against the wall, covered with a worn grey quilt. The table, at which he used to read the evening paper, remained, the rocking chair and the two straight chairs. A little, greasy gas-stove was supported upon a large packing case; some sooty pans hung from nails driven in the adjacent wall. It was his old kitchen!

The old smell of the room hung in the air like a wraith, a smell compounded of the odors ascending from the store with those odors peculiar to Baumgartner's former domesticity—smells of fried eggs and ham, cheap coffee, damp newspapers and soiled clothes.

Baumgartner moved slowly to one of the chairs and sat down. There was no sound save the noise of the rain, and of the windows rattled by the gusty wind. An illimitable peace dwelt in this room, an old, accustomed peace, that came back to his spirit now like the memory of a forgotten caress. Baumgartner breathed deeply.

Then into his peace a determination resolved itself in his mind, a resolution so massive that it seemed to press at the confines of his skull and throb in his temples like a pulse.

He was free!

It was resolved; it was indeed an

accomplished fact. He sat there, alone in his own freedom, master of his own moments. He would not go back, he would live here as before, alone.

His cheeks flushed. A little sense of sin, as if he had come just now from the commission of some pleasant shame, warmed him agreeably. It was a daring act, almost a great adventure. He had deserted his wife!

The phrase, the word, repeated itself in his mind. *Desertion!* . . . deserted his wife . . . !

He smiled, and still smiling, he found himself startled, shocked. He sprang up, with the smile still on his lips, like a grimace. He thought of his years of faithful service in the store, the long years of great respectability. A hundred people in the nearby streets were known to him, knew him, called him by name, thought well of him. If they spoke of him, they would say, until now: "Baumgartner is a respectable, church-going man." How could he escape from that!

Something like a sob passed over his lips, a small, hurtful cry that expressed the sudden pain of his opposed desires.

*Baumgartner . . . deserted his wife . . . !*

He half ran toward the little door, leaving the lights burning in the room behind him. Below, he seized his hat, switched off the store lights, locked the door, and hurried out into the rain.

The wind blew about his thin legs; the rain spat in like a cat upon his face.

He ran up the steps of his home and entered the dark hall. The family were now in bed. He ascended the stairs and heard a monotonous, rasping sound as he walked through the upper hall. The sound increased as he reached his room; it filled the room with a continuous vibration, like the noise of water in a defective pipe. It ascended up from the bed, from the rotund, sleeping bulk of Millie, his wife. Millie was snoring.

Baumgartner removed his damp clothes softly, drew his nightgown down over his head, stood in the middle of the room for a moment like an ungainly ghost, and then crept into bed beside Millie. He closed his eyes; he breathed a relieved sigh like the possible sigh of a virgin who has escaped a threat to her virginity. In a few minutes a cacophony began; Baumgartner, too, was snoring.



A BACHELOR is a man suspicious of women. A married man is one whose suspicion has been confirmed.



A WOMAN'S expenditures should always be in accord with her husband's reputed income.





# The Smartest Man in America

*By C. L. Edson*

## I

**O**FTEN enough a boy's parents decide that they will educate him to be the smartest man in America, but the boy usually balks at the plan. Young Joe Alden Geeshan, however, voted yes, and for thirty-five years they had him training rigorously for the title. Heavy-weights have sweated for months in a barn gymnasium preparing for the fistic championship; Joe Geeshan sweated away half of his life educating himself to be the champion smart-aleck of the United States.

Joe's mother, Harriet Alden, was a "direct descendant," his father, Basil Geeshan, was of unknown and probably mongrel extraction. Bass Geeshan was strong. Life hit him hard and he hit back harder. At the age of eight he learned to dread the sound of the dipper scraping on the bottom of the meal bin, for it meant that his widowed mother was out of provisions, and that he, with his brother John, a ten-year-old, must go out into that backwoods world of Indiana and by their own wit and grit replenish the food supply. Bass never saw the inside of a school-house until as a volunteer soldier in the Civil War he bivouaced in Bethel School in Kansas. He walked from Indiana to volunteer in Kansas because Kansas was long on horses and was sending out nothing but cavalry. Bass figured that by taking a long walk at the start he could ride the rest of the way through the war. They made a sergeant of him, and when he surprised and captured singlehanded two drunken Confederate officers he was brevetted captain.

He was a tough customer, that's all

there was to it. When his regiment was in camp near the home town of some of the men, Captain Bass delighted in kicking those men out of their tents when the wake-up bugle blew. Knowing that they had been up all night, with their friends and were hence full of a physiological yearning for repose, Bass would be right there to apply the toe of his boot to their pantless thighs, thus furnishing his humor-loving soul some gigantic comedy. After four years of campaigning he came out of the war grinning, a tough and stocky fellow of twenty-two without a friend in the world—and he didn't want any. He stood on his own pegs and he hit every head that showed itself. Having been wounded twice and brevetted captain, he might have had a pension, but needy as he was, and greedy, there was a clause in his code of honor that forbade him to take money for his battle scars, and this was the only good thing ever to be said of him by any one who knew him.

Young Captain Bass had liked the looks of grassy Kansas and thither he returned as a civilian and became a hog-buyer. He knew how to put his boot toe under a plank and pry up the scales, so that he stole one hog out of every ten he weighed. If a farmer questioned his weights he would swear terribly and frighten the poor hind into submission. He held all practitioners of agriculture in contempt. He called them "damned sorghum lappers," because they were too poor to afford butter and ate molasses on their corn bread. It was a hard and sterile land for lack of rain, and the people were the kind that inhabit such lean acres—

rag-tag Yankees crowded off the fat lands by their lustier kinsmen, and bewildered Germans from the cobbles of Bremen and Hamburg who had braved the West in the hope of becoming Junkers.

Captain Bass scored off these people easily. He was their banker, lending them money for seed corn. He sold lumber, and they built houses in place of their mud huts. He speculated in corn. The crop was big and the price was ten cents a bushel. They had to sell to pay their notes and Captain Bass built half a mile of cribs and piled the corn in. Next spring corn went to seventy cents a bushel and the Captain shipped the corn, having increased his capital six-fold in six months. In the expanding years he lent them money on farm notes and in the years of panic he foreclosed and became a great landholder.

One of the ne'er-do-well families in Saddle Rock was that of Hez Alden, of Pilgrim heritage. The tradition of their strain was that none of them had ever been able to make a living. They thought it was clever of them. They used to tell how old Noah Alden, the Revolutionary veteran, who was always getting into a debtor's prison, used to get himself released from jail by making oath that "I own no property of any kind anywhere—and I never expect to." The last was gratuitous, but it was wit, and so it was handed down as part of the family legend. Here, in brief, was a non-grasping tribe, a witty tribe. These qualities were termed, by squareheads, "shiftlessness and insolence." But the Aldens cared not a whoop what the barbarians thought. All the world, except direct descendants, was barbarian.

Hez Alden's oldest, homeliest daughter was reduced to her last chance, and so she married Captain Bass. In their union came together two strains, shiftless insolence and thrifty insolence, or, as they regarded it, blue-blooded wit and barbarian smartness. And their boy Joseph was to become the smartest man in the Republic.

S. S.—May—7

## II

EDUCATION was the grindstone on which Joe's smartness was to be sharpened into deadliness. Education is the one thing that the Mayflower descendants have promoted. They would sell their shoes any time to further its lofty purposes. They built schoolhouses in a string through the wilderness before they built roads. Their first dollar went to start a college and their second dollar to put a roof over their own heads. How comes it that people who had not a single other generous quality were the givers of enlightenment? Because they were born teachers. What is a teacher? A teacher is some one who tells you what's what, and who, if you try to give him any back lip, beats you half to death. The Pilgrims had stomachs; they robbed the red man's corn cribs and it was theft. The Pilgrims had land lust; they killed the Indian for his acres and that was murder. The Pilgrims had opinions; they rammed them down the throats of their victims and that was education. And so remain Theft, Slaughter and Education, and the greatest of these is Education.

It was little Joe's Yankee mother who suggested "education, education to the uttermost" as the force by which her boy must stamp his will upon the world and hurl down all unjust dominion everywhere. Her illiterate husband agreed, and little Joe's march to know-it-all-ness began. Joe was rather a sickly lad, as Napoleon had been before him. His eyes were gummed up, and to open them required medication and some slight surgery. But by the time he was old enough for public school he was hitting on all cylinders and his parents left the Plum Hill ranch and moved into Saddle Rock village, where he was placed in school. When he was in the third grade he told the teacher that he was "descended from the courtship of Miles Standish." His mother treasured his childish bon mot as a rocket flare of wit, and wrote it down for use in his biography.

Joe finished the grades, tutored by his mother during vacations, and the family moved to Chickasaw City, where he could attend the county high school. Captain Bass's banking and ranch business kept him in Saddle Rock most of the time, but he spent his week ends with his family.

Joe had two or three fights in which he was worsted. But he did not tell his parents about these encounters. He explained to his chum, Freddie Ireland, that he could fight all right until he got a stinging blow, and then he had to quit. "A good hard wallop on the nose," he said, "takes all the fight out of a fellow." He had not inherited his father's bull-dog nature, for if the Captain got a hard enough wallop on the nose he could whip a whole county. The Captain supposed, of course, that his son was like himself, willing to try to climb a thorn tree with a wild cat under each arm and the chances on getting scratched; and that he had a will to power strong enough to impress the world if he had the artillery to back it. The father was willing to spend a fortune buying for his son all the Big Berthas of education.

The state university was at Lawrence, and thither the Geeshans moved when Joe entered college. His chum, Fred Ireland, did not go to college, but got a job in a grain-elevator, and later became a steer-fattener and hog-raiser in Chickasaw City. Joe told him: "You'll stick out there in the short grass with those sorghum lappers until you're just as big a clodhopper as any of them." Joe entered on his college career with the smart Alec in him strongly fortified. His mother's coaching had gained for him the title of "the brightest boy in the grammar school" and "the best scholar in the high school" and now she hungered for the word that her boy was "the brainiest student in the university." And in the end such word was brought to her by a young professor, a doctor of philosophy, the only Harvard man on the faculty. This homesick exile hated the place for its yokel culture, and Joe's witty jibes at

everybody struck him as flashes from a discriminating mind.

Joe gained a reputation as the "hottest roaster" in school, and was therefore elected editor of the college journal, a thrice-a-week paper, which he filled with jibes, hot shot and billingsgate, to the delight of the student body, whose hunger for literature was sated only by such writings as Brann's *Iconoclast*, Smith's *Hot Stuph* and (later) Captain Billy's *Whiz-Bang*. Joe made fun of the professors' personal appearance, their size, their false teeth and their stuttering accents. Everybody detested him and feared him except the Harvard man, who enjoyed the show and was the one juror who blocked a unanimous verdict that he was an insufferable ass.

Being contentious by nature, Joe shone as a star in the debating squads. He was against everything, against the trusts, against the banking law, against the gold standard, against the East because he was born in the West, and against the West because he was going East to finish his education. In his debates he did not stick to facts and arguments as the rules required, but ridiculed, bulldozed and insulted his opponents. On the question "Resolved, that corporations should be prohibited," Joe saw his chance. Noted as a trust buster he was assigned to defend the corporations. He confounded his opponents by piling up overwhelming arguments in favor of them. He was so witty that they couldn't beat him.

In time he aroused such hatred among the leaders of the debating society that they decided to rush upon him and man-handle him. He was president of the society, and his position at a desk on a platform made a frontal attack feasible. The men told the girls to absent themselves from this particular meeting, as the forensic was to be supplanted by the bum's rush. The secret entrusted to the women came promptly to Joe's ear.

Joe's mind had now assimilated a world of learning, but his power to digest a good hard wallop on the nose was as weak as it had been in grammar-school days. But he had learned a way

out. He had bought a trick knife with a blade that telescoped into the handle and leaped out at the pressure of a button. This he had shown to one or two other lads, and the legend of it grew to that of a stiletto with a blade a foot long. The terrorized kids never again challenged him to single combat.

On the night chosen for manhandling him *en masse*, the president called the debating society to order. At a word from the leader a phalanx of double-fisted clodhoppers made for him. Joe swung two loaded pistols of .45 calibre from behind the desk and the visitors were held for downs on his one-yard line.

### III

JOE took his bachelor's degree and his master's degree at Kansas, and as side studies he learned book-keeping, blacksmithing, stenography, the piano, charcoal drawing from casts and from life, accounting, banking and veterinary *materia medica*. His father had willingly borne the cost of all this, for he saw that Joe was striding toward the goal. The cunning that had told Bass to make a long walk to get a horse that he might ride the rest of the way through the war, advised Joe's long stalking of the steed of knowledge, on which high horse he could at last ride down the world.

But the middle of the nineties were lean years, and though the Captain "owned a hull county," cash was scarce. So he got Joe a job teaching school at Saddle Rock, while "mammy" stayed in Lawrence with the other children that were not yet through college. It was the first time that Joe had ever slept under a roof that his mother wasn't under. He grew homesick and wanted to give up his school. He wrote endless letters to mammy complaining that his scholars were Germans and therefore unteachable. "Blessings on the man," he wrote, "who first said, Damn the Dutch!" He ridiculed the plump, rosy German girls, who, mistaking his leanness for hunger, brought gifts to his boarding house of smoked goose,

sauerkraut and Schwartenmagen "for the professor." He took the skin off of every one who touched him and tanned it with the acid of his wit. These peppery letters about nothing were carefully filed by his Mayflower mother for inclusion in the "Life and Letters of Joseph Alden Geeshan."

In trying to catch a freight out of town one Saturday afternoon Joe seized the hand rail, but the caboose was going too fast for him and it threw him thirty feet on his head. The wit was knocked out of him for once; he could not rise. The train stopped and Fred Ireland, who had boarded it ahead of him, ran back to where his crumpled friend was lying. Fred picked him up and was relieved to see him open his eyes.

"Are you badly hurt, Joe?" gasped Ireland.

With the first half breath that came into his lungs Joe answered:

"Foolish question. You know—that's the way—I always get on and off a train."

They continued to Chickasaw City, where Joe omitted paying the social call he had intended, but sat around the hotel nursing his aches. An Indian doctor was there preparing to put on a medicine show that evening. Joe knew that Fred Ireland would be the first patron of the swindle, for the cappers and the first patron always win as a bait for the rest of the peasantry. Fred had been shrewd enough to discover this and had confided his intentions to Joe.

That night the Indian doctor took a hundred-dollar bill and wrapped it around a phial of Mohawk Diabetes Remedy.

"Who," he asked the crowd, "will show enough confidence in this medicine and in the gold notes of the United States Treasury to give me fifty dollars for this package?"

The price was ten times higher than Ireland expected, but he stepped forward and bought the little parcel. The doctor hurriedly offered several more for ten dollars apiece, but the yokels were waiting for Ireland to unwrap his prize. There was no hundred-dollar bill

in it—nothing but the medicine. The medicine show was over.

That night Joe twitted and derided his crestfallen friend until Ireland began to hate him. Joe had conceived this prodigious whimsicality and had tipped off the Indian faker how to knick the village wisehead.

#### IV

JOE next went to Ann Arbor for two years of political economy and won his doctor's degree with a book which showed the relationship between the cycle of drought years and the cycle of financial panics. Now he was ready for the Harvard Law School, and his mother went with him to inspect Cambridge and Boston. They also visited Plymouth and stood in awe before the "old family home," the house wherein had dwelt John Alden and Priscilla. Captain Bass did not go East on this pilgrimage. Alden blood meant nothing to him. He believed in cunning and force. He had them, and they had brought him riches and power. But how much richer and more powerful he might have been if he had had an education! "All he knowed he learnt hisself," as he often expressed it. He had gone into the army illiterate and had come out a captain. He might have come out in Grant's shoes if he had been a man of learning, for he had all the qualities of Grant except his education. After the war he had picked up every scrap of knowledge that came his way. By learning legal forms and business usages he had been able to make himself rich in a poor country at the expense of the untutored mishaps.

"Know more than the other fella and you can always do him," declared Captain Bass. "Lawyers all get rich because they know more than their clients. I seen a big railroad lawyer in Topeka beat a \$40,000 damage suit by laughing a doctor outen the witness stand. The lawyer shown the jury that he knowed more about medicine than the doctor did. A good lawyer ort to know everything. My boy Joe is going to learn

everything. And when he comes out of law school he will be the smartest man in the country."

At thirty, Joe finished his course at the Harvard Law School. He had formed no intimate friendships there, but many respected his quick wit, for he had scored on everyone. He went to New York City and joined a thriving firm as law clerk. But only routine work fell to him and he was eager to get his teeth into a real suit so that he could rise to his proper stature in the great metropolis. Once or twice he got wind of prospective meat and tried to snatch a damage suit or action to quiet title. But nothing came his way and he got sick of the East. A Westerner had no chance there; everything went by favor or by family pull. He had no friend at court; he was above such namby-pambyism, anyway. He was armed with intellectual whiz-bangs, but he had no chance to shoot them.

Then his father died and Joe came into money. He went West, where a man has a chance, and joined a law firm in Kansas City. Captain Bass had closed his career as bravely as he had begun. To his bedside had come the minister, and though the Captain had lived an ungodly life, and was cruel to all those people, they pitied him in his agonies and the minister said: "Accept his grace now, and you will meet all of us in heaven."

"I'll meet you in hell!" gasped the Captain with his last breath. "After laughing at your bunk all my life, do you think I have turned coward at the end?" And so he choked.

In Kansas City Joe found no chance to advance in his profession. His qualities were unnoticed even in that barbarous outpost. Hundreds of his old acquaintances were there, and he attended card parties in their homes. Not all those homes were happy, and he solicited a few small fry divorce cases. But they brought him very little. Seventy thousand dollars had been spent on his education, and in his three years of law practice he made but \$1,200. At one time he thought he had an inheri-



tance case involving \$100,000. But after spending a hundred odd dollars investigating, he found that his client was mistaken; the money was to go to his heirs if he should have heirs *of issue*, but the old derelict had none, and Joe could not get him any. If the will had just said "heirs," Joe told him he could have adopted one and thus clouded title to his sister's land and blackmailed her out of a few thousands for a quit claim.

About this time Joe's mother, who was handling the landed property around Saddle Rock, was stricken with paralysis, and Joe left Kansas City to be near her. At her request he had dropped the Joe from his name and was now Alden Geeshan, because Alden was a mighty name in America. He hung out his sign, "Alden Geeshan, Lawyer," in the little town of Saddle Rock. The natives who had known him as Little Joe asked how he had become "Alden." He told them of the great John Alden; they had never heard of him. They asked, "What did he do?" Joe told them he was the smartest one of the Pilgrims. "What did he do besides that?" Joe said nothing.

There was no law business in Saddle Rock; the county seat lawyers at Chickasaw had it all. Joe spent his time at Plum Hill ranch with his feeble mother. She had mortgaged all the farms to complete Joe's education, and his failure had crushed her. All that the Geeshan bulldog blood had gathered, the Alden witty blood had dissipated. At the moment when she began to realize that his education could not snare the world, but that wilful men ignored him, she fell back paralyzed. High tide at Armageddon hurled her down in wreckage, and she lived now only as an agonizing ghost amid the fragments of her daring dream.

## V

PLUM HILL ranch was fenceless and desolate and the house so wrecked that the roof leaked. Joe went to Chickasaw to talk things over with Fred Ireland. Ireland was now president of the

leading bank and the political oracle of the county. His opinion influenced everybody. He told Joe that the property was lost. "The mortgages," he said, are too big, and the farms are hopelessly run down by bone-headed tenants. The notes are all overdue, but I didn't foreclose because it was your mother. Now, Joe, suppose we foreclose and sell this dirt to the Dutchmen; they'll build it up into farm land again. You can keep Plum Hill as long as your mother lives. She used to give me warm cinnamon cookies when we were kids. Plum Hill is mortgaged for more than it is worth, and the bank couldn't think of lending more. But I'll make you a personal loan of \$10,000 if you will patch up the ranch and raise hogs there."

Joe's mother died and he notified his brother and sister. His brother was press agent for a Bill show touring the British dominions, and his sister the wife of a collector for an industrial insurance company in Scranton, Pa. His letter said that all the property was gone but Plum Hill and that he was farming the place in a desperate effort to meet the interest charges.

Then came the war. Its cyclonic draft passed over Plum Hill and scarcely stirred a poplar leaf. A year after the war the land boom came. Fred Ireland drove out to Plum Hill and found Joe shoveling corn into the hog lot. In his ragged clothes, with a stubble of gray beard, he looked like a broken old man, although he was only forty-five. Joe's sad eyes kindled when he saw his old friend, and he brushed the corn silks from his face and went and sat in the banker's car.

Ireland told Joe that he could save the farm for him. "Sell it," he said, "while the boom is on. This mud-hole isn't worth \$60 an acre, but it will bring \$200 now. These hicks have got rich and they're crazy. Get enough cash down to pay off the mortgages and take notes for the rest. When the boom collapses they'll forfeit on the notes and you will have the land again, free from all debt. Another thing: Quit feeding that two-dollar corn to twenty-cent

hogs. Sell the hogs along with the corn and bank the money. Six months from now corn will be a quarter a bushel and the two dollars you get for a bushel now will buy eight bushels then."

Joe followed the plan and Fred's predictions came true. Joe's brother, Sid, was back from the war, a lieutenant in the Canadian army with the Victoria Cross won at Vimy Ridge. Joe and Sid went to visit Fred Ireland at his Chick-asaw home.

"I have cut a small figure in the world," said Joe. "My kid brother became a hero and my old chum Fred is the boss of the short-grass country. Why is it that I never amounted to anything."

"Well, I'll tell you, Joe," Fred answered, relighting his cigar. "It's that damned Alden blue blood in you. Your mother always used to say: 'The Aldens are teachers!' That's true; they always teach. But they never learn anything."

"Your brother Sid, here, inherited your father's roughneck, bulldog blood and it made him a soldier. You inherited the Alden wits and your father's wits, but you didn't inherit his courage. Your father used to insult every man and then smash him. He feared no man. With his last breath he insulted the preacher and defied Hell. To get away with that kind of stuff you must have cast-iron fists, and he had 'em. I'm not that kind of fighter. I couldn't use force, so I used education to advance my fortunes."

"Education?" echoed Joe incredulously. "You used education?"

"Yes. I let everybody teach me. Every truth that I learned paid me dividends. From you I learned not to be a Smart Aleck. When I was a hog-raiser I never kicked a hog; I stroked their ears, scratched their backs with a

currycomb, and studied swine psychology until I got rich out of a hog herd that never had the plague. I studied people as individuals and as mobs. I made money where the mob got swindled. You stung me once by your smartness but I forgave you. Others did not and you haven't a friend in the world but me."

In a husky voice Joe said: "It's true, Fred. And Hell is mild compared with the agonies I have known. I aimed so high, I fought so hard, and now I am back on the dunghill where I started. For twenty years no question came to me that I did not answer, I entered no debate I did not win, no man jibed me that I didn't crush him on the comeback, and no mind clashed with mine on which I didn't score. And now I am a lemon. Why even the patriots riding around to beat up Dutchmen for not falling for Liberty bonds didn't drop in on me at all. They knew I couldn't buy any Liberty bonds, but they might have asked me to join in the sport of heckling Dutchmen. But I count for nothing, even here on the ground I grew on."

"Well, Joe," said Fred affectionately, "I had your number from the start. I might have told you; but you belong to the tribe that can't be told. You are the kind that tells others. That kind is abhorred. They are doomed to defeat. You learned everything, but this you could not learn—until too late. But Joe, old horse, there is a sort of grandeur in you. You took your defeat and still live. Others, when their ego cracked, fell paralyzed and died. You tried for world conquest, and there is nothing mock heroic in your downfall. Man is but a fevered clod that dares aspire, a whirl of barnyard dust screaming for immortality."

"Ain't it true!" said Joe.



# The Nietzschean Follies

## V

### The Jade Rosary

By Frank Pease

#### I

THE French Revolution turned 18th Century epigrams into platitudes. The Russian Revolution turned 20th Century platitudes into principles. Since Lenin, every soap-boxer thinks himself both economist and statesman.

#### II

ADVICE to young women; exquisite manners will get you farther than brains. Men have most of the brains anyhow, but no manners; which is why they will put such a high valuation on yours.

#### III

STENDHAL wrote of God that his only excuse was that He did not exist; Baudelaire that God is the only being who, to govern, need not even exist; but the best excuse for God is the interest He excites.

#### IV

SOME people have held it against Sir Thomas Browne that he o.k.'d the execution of a witch. But what was the death of an old woman more or less beside the Urn Burial? I have no doubt but what, being old, she was a witch. At any rate, she probably believed in witches quite as thoroughly as those who burned her.

#### V

WOMEN are not like tigers. When caught in the trap of zoological gardens, tigers destroy their young; they refuse to rear prisoners. While women. . . .

#### VI

WILSON's lugubrious fate—to have only a Tumulty for his Boswell!

#### VII

JOSEPH CONRAD is a very dangerous writer. He has the terrible power of evoking sympathy, insight, before all, suspended judgment; for—*tout comprendre, n'est-ce pas tout pardonner?*

#### VIII

WHAT woman ever caught cold in a becoming gown?

#### IX

MEN are divided into at least three classes: fools, fakers and fanatics. How great are women! They can love all three—often in one and the same man.

#### X

WHAT a discovery!—to learn that Talleyrand trained young men away from zeal!

## XI

SOCIALISM is out of place in America, for what is America but Proletaria come into its own? A few parvenues do not make a ruling class, nor a few capitalists an aristocracy. What *are* America's capitalists but yesterday's proletarians? It does not take sharp eyes to detect beneath the motley of America's capitalists the folk—that immemorial foe to culture.

## XII

FRENCH women require neither melancholy, sickness nor beauty to make them attractive.

## XIII

ALL geniuses either die young or grow fat—or does this happen only in England?

## XIV

PEOPLE should have been able to *smell* the Robespierre in Woodrow Wilson the first six months of his reign. Every Robespierrian stigma was there in plain view: long-windedness, ego-mania, fictitious grandeur, the stuffed club of Presbyterian solemnity, a malevolent eye to history, party cantankerousness, before all, pedantry. Lacking the guillotine and the incorruptibility, is this not a perfect description of "The Sea Green One"? Worst of all, neither had any *style*.

## XV

As a rule, women do not make good revolutionists; they believe in a man, but not "man." "The Revolution" is an accomplished fact when a woman has found the man she wants. After that, she is merely a camp-follower of revolution.

## XVI

BLESSED are the poor in spirit—they want nothing.

## XVII

OF learning, Mme. du Deffand said: "I was like Fontenelle, I was barely ten years old when I began to understand nothing." One has to be at least forty in this age of "scientific" education to have got that far.

## XVIII

WHEN the Great Empress, Tze-Shi, and her imperial companion, the Emperor, Kwang-Hsee, fled the Allied Vandals at Peking, they offered two sacred jade rings to their ancestral spirits at a wayside Buddhist shrine. Today an American business man and a woman of the stage are wearing these rings. . . . Midnight of the Gods. . . .

## XIX

POLITICS no longer attracts great men or statesmen. Ever since Talleyrand and Metternich, with the possible exceptions of Disraeli and Li Hung Chang, politics is an affair of opportunists only. Bismarck was not a statesman, he was a blacksmith.

## XX

It was rumored that on the third day after he arose from the dead, Lazarus completely changed his will.

## XXI

CHILDREN have this in common with the aged: malice. One is the innocent malice of savagery, the other the sophisticated malice of weariness, the gesture of anathema, of malediction upon life.

## XXII

RECIPIENTS of the king's largesse could well believe in magic, in the divinity of the throne, even in the essential goodness of life. Largesse bore all the earmarks of enchantment—always so dear to the heart of the folk: surprise,

munificence, spontaneity, a gesture in the grand manner, such as God Himself might make. . . . Modern charity is low, another invention of the devil.

## XXIII

LITTLE girls at play are more like society than is society itself. Observe their tyrannical insistence upon forms. Are we, then the victims of children?

## XIV

ANYTHING which palls quickly, a young and merely pretty woman, for example, was never intended to be loved, but only to be worn, like a new style, a favorite coat, the latest vogue in jewels, and then only enough to meet the requirements of fashion. If young men knew this there would be more romance and fewer foolish marriages. If young and merely pretty women knew it there would be more love; for old men, who really love—what do they care for the requirements of fashion?

## XXV

GORDON CRAIG builds heroic *mise en scene* for an age of dwarfs, but that is nothing against Gordon Craig. *Au contraire*. . . .

## XXVI

EDGAR POE made two mistakes: marriage and America.

## XXVII

PITT could undergo something approaching madness and apoplexy at news of a Napoleonic victory. But who hears of anything like this today? Not even the Kaiser is known to have thrown a fit. Bad news today simply means an excuse for coalition, or even a complete change of party. The straight line is disappearing. Soon it will be a relic, a museum curiosity.

## XXVIII

Now that Americans have made enough money to rest on the oars a bit, looking about for the next thing, what do they propose? Something to justify the prodigious scramble of the past century, something in the grand manner à la Pericles, Leo X, Frederick the Great, Louis XIV, the First Counsel? Not at all. They propose to make more money.

## XXIX

WITH what haste and nicety a court appoints counsel for him who pleads guilty, desires no trial, seeks no mercy. "Tut! Tut! You shall not escape *that* easily."

## XXX

EMPERORS and kings are going out of fashion, but, worse still, so are the Ninons and du Barrys.

## XXXI

THE insane have the boon of irresponsibility. Sanity, then, is penalizable?

## XXXII

THE Improved College Professor: the phonograph.

## XXXIII

NOTHING could please the devil more than for men to "speak the truth"—seeing they know it not.

## XXXIV

LIFE is no longer a purse to be spent lavishly, but a miser's hoard to be gripped tightly. Great eating, deep drinking, free spending, these are among the best attributes of striking periods; they release the spirit; they swell the soul. The trouble with civilization is that its stomach is shrinking. Soon it will be quite shriveled; and differentiation, striking personalities, rare acts and attitudes, egoism, will be



looked upon as highly dangerous, as vestiges of a perilous past—the past of jovial roysterers, the Cæsar Borgias, Don Juans and D'Artagnans. Falstaff is dead. . . . Thus are the masses revenged for modern rationing—they infect all others with paucity.

## XXXV

AMERICA is the world's greatest danger—it plebeianizes everything.

## XXXVI

THE first tradesman was the first miser who met the first hungry man.

## XXXVII

LIFE would be intolerable if only the truth were spoken, though neither logicians nor moralists can believe this.

## XXXVIII

To have lived without making any disturbance on earth, to grow old without amassing fortune or friends, to have killed not a single man, to have broken neither laws nor hearts; never to have committed arson, mayhem nor an autobiography, and, finally, to die in bed—is that the life of a fool, an honest fellow, a coward, or an extremely wise man?



## Appreciation

*By John Torcross*

I WAS explaining to her the technique of the Elizabethan drama and she was fascinated.

When I dwelt upon the history of the theatre her lovely eyes fairly sparkled.

Suddenly she said, "Your hair is awfully curly over the ears."



A CHRISTIAN democracy is a place where a child is considered able to decide on his religion at the age of fourteen, but on his politics only at the age of twenty-one. Obviously some problems demand more thought than others.



# The Wishes That Were Granted

By M. Powell Fohn

## I

"THE End" flashed on the screen. Someone stepped on peanut shells. A baby wailed. Indistinct forms stirred and stumbled into the aisles. Seats banged, followed by rising voices and a shrill giggle.

Ruth, pulling on her hat, joined the last stragglers from the balcony, but deserted them on the second stair-landing to enter the dressing-room. She drew a powder-puff from her pocket and crossed to the mirror. The first glance in it was one of curiosity. Had the photoplay she had just seen and the emotions it had aroused left any impression on her face? After several moments' scrutiny she was undecided whether the circles beneath her eyes and the downward droop of her mouth was caused by cinema strain or by her day at the office.

The evening bells of St. Mary's began to chime. She turned to the window and, pushing aside the curtains, gazed devoutly across the street at the soft glow of the stained-glass windows in the dusk. Not that she was particularly religious, Ruth thought, rather that it pleased her to imagine she was—to enjoy all of the privileges with none of the restrictions.

She left the dressing-room and slowly descended the steps to the street exit. She was unusually tired and she had forgotten to pay her boarding-house bill that morning. Trying to live in the city was not easy she decided as she joined the leisurely moving crowd on the walk. Still she was incurably romantic, she knew, and she *had* found a background in coming to the city. Such a city—a mosaic pattern of crooked streets, square plazas and wan-

dering narrow river. An old canvas, she thought, dim and dusty, painted over in newer and brighter colors that failed to clearly erase traces of ancient Spanish influence and bits of rugged frontier life.

The uncertain Texas breeze stirred down the long street and was lost in the streaked and faded sunset. Old Julius, following a line of cars, stopped at intervals his fantastically draped pony and, raising an orange-colored megaphone, sonorously begged that a nearby sale be attended. Like sifting coal dust the evening shadows enveloped the walls and street. Lights appeared shrouded in misty blurs. The soft strains of an old Southern ballad drifted on the air. The blind violinists! Ruth turned at the Woolworth corner into Alamo Plaza. The two ancient beggars, sitting on camp-stools in a doorway, rolled their heads as they played, the money-can resting on a penny weighing machine between them.

Across the upper end of the plaza she made out the vine-covered ruins and gray shadows of the old mission. Down the walk before her a tambourine jingled and the Salvation Army began its opening song. Men and boys gathered here and there to listen with studiously indifferent faces. No hurry and no bustle—people strolled lazily. Shabby working girls with drooping eyelids dreamed before window displays of expensive clothes. Newsboys chanted the evening papers.

In front of the old Grand Opera House Ruth paused. It had been the pride of the State in the last half of the nineteenth century. Now the intricate woodwork and brilliant color design hid shame-faced behind a coat of

careless paint and movie posters. The seats, in the past so difficult to obtain, were shorn of their numbers, the boxes dusty and unused, and the one-time expensive admittance granted for a quarter to anyone applying to the gum-chewing girl at the ticket-window.

She turned her back on the posters with their primitive colors and searched through the palms at the lower end of the plaza for a still older friend. The yellow squares of light identified the ancient hostelry. It also had been overshadowed, but not as ill-used.

Before continuing her walk she glanced up at the electric display over a building at the end of the plaza and sighed. The old beer sign, now showing a bottle of milk between the blue-bonnet and cactus above the moving figures of the cowboy, the horse and the steer which when roped, waved a defiant hoof in the air, was the last of the three friends.

She crossed Crockett Street and in the next block entered a tiny drug store. Somehow, in the rush of the past ten years' modernity, it had escaped remodeling. The door was so small most people missed it. Choosing a table at the back of the dim interior, Ruth ordered a lemonade. For what she called "some strange reason," the place always caused her to think of Dickens's London. The proprietor, small and fat with a round little stomach, had a shiny bald head, a fringe of hair at the edge of it, and a short Vandyke beard. His little eyes twinkled, and even when serious his face appeared to anticipate the smile that usually possessed it. The clerk, a tall, thin youth, was a mystery to her. He had a deep voice, extremely sad, and dark face that never lost its gloomy expression, yet he talked flippantly and told a perpetual joke to anyone who would listen. Around the walls the rows of tall medicine bottles, sitting primly side by side with their big glass stoppers like Quaker hats, reminded her of quaint old doctors warning by their contents. Lingered until she had no visible excuse to stay longer, Ruth

finally paid the clerk and re-entered the street.

How much she had found to see and experience in her evening rambles since she had come to the city! They had held everything romance demanded except someone with whom she could share them. Time after time the men at the office had asked to call, and she had thought, at last, she would have a fellow explorer, but always they proved interested only in the boss, the latest baseball returns and "petting." Would she finally give up opposing them, or would she be doomed to the lonely misery of an unmarried woman because she cared for something more than their interests?

Surely there *must* be men who read not only the newspapers, but Barrie, Dunsany and Conrad. Men who could forget their work, forget that she was a girl long enough to appreciate the age and beauty of the city without trying to be humorous or becoming sentimental over it. If only she could meet such a man! Often she could not sleep at night so great was the wish, and she would move restlessly over and over. On the days that followed these sleepless nights she was scolded at the office and warned about her inefficient work. When Ruth reached Commerce Street the evening star hung like a bit of hot silver in the gray sky. She thought of a custom of childhood and whispered:

"Star light, star bright,  
First star I've seen tonight,  
I wish I may, I wish I might  
Have this wish I wish tonight."

The old wish followed: "I wish, oh, I wish for a man who sees things as I do!"

"Good evening, Miss Payne," a young man raised his hat and crossed the walk to where she stood.

## II

SIX-THIRTY! Dave Brennan rose from his stool back of the counter to move the magazine-racks into the store.

As he struggled with their bulk he sighed. What a difference from last year! He had been a fool to get mixed up in that gambling affair at the university, especially when he had been certain of the Malcolm Scholarship. That would have meant two more years at school. He might have done something about it, probably, if he hadn't developed that damned cough. Wonderful start he had made toward his much-planned career as a writer—a clerk in a rundown bookstore! He smiled scornfully at his reflection in a mirror fitted into a jutting wall. Still, there was the city. It *had* been a surprise. On leaving Connecticut he had expected wooden shacks and cowboys. He had found a city of quaint charm, an intermingling of picturesque Mexican and ordinary American customs.

Calling to the manager that he was leaving, Dave reached beneath the counter for his hat, "punched out" and eagerly started westward. Long strips of clouds lay above old San Fernando Cathedral; the sun had gone, but the red glow of the sky stained the towers.

On Haymarket Plaza he slid onto a bench before one of the numerous long tables. A *chili* queen served him with *tamales* that kept his boarding-house supper, later, from seeming quite so hopeless. The many fires, glowing spots about the plaza, sent up thin smoke that hung wavering over the tables, smelling fragrantly of spicy foods.

As the evening came, an old harpist crouched in a corner of the plaza began to play "La Golden Renia." The growing shadow of the old Market House was broken by the lights of its interior shining through the doors, giving glimpses of the fruit stands—plotches of color among the more drab booths.

Never before had Dave's book friends seemed so real. Theron Ware came to him as he admired an ancient *padre* discoursing with a *médico* moving slowly among adoring groups of women, heads wrapped in long black *mantillas*, and old *señors* who increased their shrunken height with immense *sombreros*.

Elia followed Dave as he left the plaza and wandered down a narrow street. Aged women sat cross-legged along the walk, hovering over baskets of *fruta* and other baskets filled with the smooth brown cones of *azúcar*. Counters piled high with bright-colored clothes were on the outside of the stores, the strange words of a foreign tongue on the signs above them. Grimy *muchachos* swarmed over greasy *tortilla* stands. A violin maker, in a hole of a shop, muttered to himself as he carved. A busy little Jew in a neat store watched the door eagerly as he straightened stacks of fancy goods. Sleek heads and vivid ribbons flashed in and out of the crowds before the Mexican vaudeville house.

Rip Van Winkle echoed Dave's sympathetic laugh at a sleepy *hombre*, whose *señora's* call evoked only a "*mañana*" as he moved his chair farther down the walk out of her voice's reach.

Martin Eden looked over Dave's shoulder through the glass window of a laundry at the tired struggle of stoop-shouldered "greasers."

Mysterious doorways loomed in the dusk, Mexican girls with heavy-lidded eyes smiled at Dave from their depths. In the months past he had entered some of them with Tom Jones.

He paused at a break in the shop fronts to gaze into the ebony depths of San Pedro Creek, not much wider than a ditch, the brick walls of the stores rising on either side of it. As he lounged against the short railing, Dorian Grey joined him in the study of the perfect beauty of a fair-skinned Mexican youth.

Making his way back toward the center of the city, Baron Munchausen sat near Dave as he listened to an old cattleman, on the rundown porch of a hotel near the edge of the Mexican district, tell of frontier days.

Jennie Gerhart smiled sadly as she passed with Dave an adobe house where an aged German sat, face buried in hands, on a stone leading to the door.

Almayer sighed, too, as Dave leaned over the bridge on Commerce Street to watch the ever-moving water. He had

found something at last that he wanted to write. He would give the world a glimpse into an ancient city in a part of the country that was generally considered *new*. How he hated that last word; real beauty was not to be found in it! He would immortalize the flaming colors and the odd customs of these childish, half-savage little people who were trying to exist by retaining and assimilating old and strange forms. But he was lonesome; fearing the cough, he was discouraged and almost desperate. If only he could find someone to help him, to talk to him, and to go with him on his rambles. A girl, who had enough of the mother in her to make him take care of himself in the many ways he had failed to do. But girls were never interested in anything, it seemed, except the boys they had been out with, clothes and themselves.

An old Mexican *profeta* had told him in broken English that if he kissed a penny and cast it into the San Antonio River, a wish made would be granted. Dave had laughed at the idea. Now he drew a coin from his pocket. Glancing around to see that he was not observed, he raised it to his lips and dropped it over the bridge railing. As it hit the water with a tiny splash he murmured: "To meet a girl who thinks as I do!"

He glanced down the walk to where a girl had stopped. He hesitated. She must have seen him. Probably she was waiting for him. He guessed he'd better speak.

### III

THEY walked down South Alamo Street.

"Have a hard day at the office, Miss Payne?"

"No" (of course he'd ask that!), "about the same as usual. This should have been my half-holiday, but I didn't get off until four, then I went to a movie."

They passed several blocks in silence.

"A nice evening," Ruth ventured.

"Very." (Naturally she'd call all the golden wonder of dusk *nice*!)

"I understand you're a stranger, Mr. Brennan. Don't you get lonesome here?"

"Oh, I read and write."

A passing street car caused her to misunderstand.

"Read Wright! Harold Bell?" (She should have guessed *that* was his taste.)

"Several of his books are"—he concealed his disgust; he could not offend her—"are very good." (Shades of Dreiser!)

"I do not read very often since I came to the city," she began. "I have several friends—" she stopped abruptly. She had almost told him of the opera house, the old hotel, and the beer sign.

"Oh, I see." Dave did not press her for further information. (Just like the rest: couldn't keep from talking about the other fellows.)

They turned into Adams Street. His swinging hand touched hers, and he grasped it. For the moment he was thrilled. Firm and cool, yet tremulous, it was the kind of hand he had imagined the girl he wanted would have. A "Silly, you're rumpling my sleeve," from Ruth caused him to remember and drop it. Girls never forgot they had on clothes. Ruth suppressed a sigh. What else could she have expected—men were all the same!

The boarding-house was reached and entered. They parted at the head of the stair.

"I enjoyed the walk, Mr. Brennan." Ruth opened the door to her room.

"I assure you, I did, Miss Payne. See you at supper." He opened a similar door across the hall.

Removing her hat Ruth sat down on the bed. So that was the best the star could do—a thick-headed Wright-reading Yankee—a "lunger" at that! She buried her face in the pillow, sobbing.

Dave remained standing in the middle of his room, hands in his pockets. That simple-minded, Wright-loving rube of a Payne girl! If that was the success of the *profeta's* advice, he'd a good mind to go back and dive for his penny. "A wish granted." Bah!



# A Small-Town Episode

By Muna Lee

## I

THE straight walls of the room bent forward an instant, then wavered back out of sight. She tried to call; her voice made no sound in her own ears. The world was becoming a fluent gray haze . . . she felt herself sinking, sinking, sinking interminably through a soft medium impalpable as cloud. And then a security, as of strong arms bearing her off through unsteady space. She made a last effort to think, to rally her faltering will with the memory of those who loved her, their grief . . .

## II

WITH a terrible shudder throughout her deadened body, she felt herself struggling back into consciousness—but was it, she asked herself dully, consciousness of reality or of a dream? Between half-opened lids she saw the familiar room, and her aunt, in a vivid rose-colored kimono, bending above her. That kimono became the focus of her scattered thought. If it were real she was awake. Her entire attention centered on the question of its color? Did-Aunt-Clara-have-a-bright-rose-kimono? The questions ran together in her mind and she felt herself drifting off again.

The figure above her leaned nearer, spoke.

"Do you know me, Gayle?" asked Aunt Clara anxiously.

The girl made a tremendous effort and stretched out her hand to touch the gaudy crêpe.

"Is your kimono—bright—like this?" she asked gaspingly. Her aunt smoothed back the hair, wet with perspiration.

"My new one," she said, "because the doctor's here. Are you better now?"

Through all her body was the sensation that comes to a numb foot too hastily stamped. She closed her eyes and became dimly aware of a drift of voices—her aunt's—another's—Dr. Thorne's? With a supreme physical effort she sat upright.

"I'm all right," she said; and sank back against the pillows, exhausted but fully conscious.

It had been an unusual but not a unique accident. It was a chilly, rainy morning, and she had slipped from her bed to close the window and light the small gas heater so that the room might be warm when she dressed; then she had drawn the covers about her again, waiting for a more spring-like temperature. According to custom and contrary to law, the little heater had no pipe. The flame had been too high, resulting in an escape of unconsumed gas which quickly filled the room with its poison.

When her aunt, knocking at the door a half-hour later, had entered to find out why there was no answer, she saw Gayle lying across the bed, struggling for breath in hoarse inhuman gasps. Frantically summoned, the doctor had arrived almost immediately.

The girl was young and strong, and there was no defect of heart or lungs; so that in two or three days the bad

effects of the gas had passed, leaving only an ineffaceable memory of sinking—sinking—to a deep security; a recollection of the terrible physical reluctance of returning life; and a somewhat trivial, exhilarated sense of adventure—a lingering state of not unpleasant nervous tension, due perhaps to the injections of strychnine which had restored her consciousness.

When in a few days she went back to entering accounts and making change at her uncle's place of business—the small-town combination of grocery, hardware, and feed-store—she felt a pleasant strangeness in the familiar surroundings: the bags of bran piled in the rear of the huge, high-ceilinged room, the milk-cans in a shining row above the shelves of tinned soup, the gaudily-labelled packages of raisins and washing powder and corn meal; all were like things seen for the first time. She began to realize how far she had travelled since checking up the weekly total of sales last Saturday. Wind and hot sunshine were touched with wonder; and the casual faces she had known for years seemed suddenly walls between other souls and her own.

That morning she saw few faces. The town was somnolent with mid-week inactivity. None of the customers who drifted in—stragglers from the outlying farms—had heard of her illness, so there was no reference to it.

She felt a vague disappointment at this. It seemed to her that she had returned gloriously from sudden and perilous adventure, and she felt something of the adventurer's desire to find words for the experience that had clashed into her life. The peace of that descent to death recurred to her again and again as she checked over the items on sales-slips, stamped the scanty mail, telephoned to the other hardware store to verify the price of staples. She knew that she could never again feel afraid of dying. Of that deepest knowledge she felt that

she could hardly speak and be understood; but as for the rest—her sensations on losing consciousness, her sensations on regaining it—she felt no such hesitancy.

At half-past three one of her aunt's friends came in, intent on fresh eggs. She greeted Gayle with a marked cordiality, praised her new blouse, left instructions that a setting of Rhode Island Reds be secured for her, and bustled off, trailing friendly phrases. Gayle wondered why Mrs. Abbott had not inquired about her experience with the gas, and concluded somewhat disappointedly that she had not heard of it.

Still later a girl of Gayle's own age entered and came over to her desk.

"My, you don't look as if you'd been sick!" she exclaimed, with a self-conscious titter.

Gayle looked up from a litter of invoices.

"I wasn't really sick," she explained; "just overcome by the gas. It made me feel weak for a while—"

"I should think it would!" interrupted the other. "But how could you leave it unlighted? Weren't you afraid?"

"But it was lighted," Gayle said. "Fumes escaped anyway—carbon monoxide, I think Doctor Thorne said. There was no pipe, you know—"

"Hardly anybody has a pipe in the bedroom. Of course, I guess the doctor knows. But I never heard of that's happening before, did you?"

"No," said Gayle. "It's unusual."

"That's what everyone says," her friend acquiesced, signaling through the glass front of the store to a blonde girl passing by, who obediently stopped and waited.

Gayle watched the two stroll on down the street with a half uneasy suspicion that they were talking of her—a suspicion that deepened to certainty when the girl with blonde braids looked back and quickly averted her gaze when she noticed that she was seen.

## III

Gayle went home that evening puzzled and uncertain. Light and air had lost their new-found glamor. But faces, the familiar faces she passed on the uncurving street—indifferent, curious, or determinedly friendly—remained walls between other souls and her own.

Her aunt seemed preoccupied at dinner, but unusually solicitous. She avoided questions about Gayle's day, beyond a worried inquiry as to whether she was tired. Gayle answered vaguely in the negative, and noticed with some surprise that this evening there was whipped cream for the preserved strawberries.

Next morning she stopped under the cottonwood beside the gate, catching sight of a familiar figure hurrying to overtake her.

"Why, Daddy Barnes," she cried, "I didn't know that you had come back from the city!"

Oliver Barnes mopped a rubicund brow, and looked down at the girl affectionately. He remembered with photographic exactitude Gayle as he had seen her first, a little girl of seven, standing beneath this same cottonwood and gazing wistfully at a group of children playing across the street, too shy to join them unasked and too unversed in the rigid conventions which children observe in their relations with each other to realize that her timidity, her obvious lack of self-confidence, was an absolute barrier to any invitation from them.

Oliver Barnes had seen and understood, with a feeling of tenderness for this forlorn gray-eyed child who had come to live with his next-door neighbor. He himself had been an orphan reared among strangers, and he realized fully the agonies of loneliness and distrust in the little heart. Their friendship had begun that morning and had flourished until "Daddy Barnes" was the most vivid of the girl's shy affections. For himself, he had a childless man's love for her;

and at this moment, pondering just how to say what was in his mind, he remembered in every detail the pathetically grateful response which the lonely child had made to his greeting a dozen years before.

He sighed, and wondered helplessly how to phrase what he had to say.

"You are all right now, Gayle?" he asked at last.

"Oh, yes, Daddy Barnes; how did you hear? Did—"

"I heard about it at the drug-store when I got back," he answered briefly. Then,

"Gayle, you know that I am your friend, don't you?"

"Why, of course, Daddy Barnes!" In surprise she stopped and looked up into his face, trying to read his thought. "Why did you ask that?"

Oliver Barnes looked down at her with love and pity in his eyes.

"It's all right, little girl," he said.

"But I want you to remember this—remember it always: right or wrong. I'm your friend. You can always depend on my standing by you,—always! Remember, right or wrong."

The girl's eyes did not leave his face.

"But, Daddy Barnes," she began uncertainly, "why do you say that? Of course I know that you are my friend. Are you going away?" she asked, struck by a sudden thought.

"I'm going to stay right here!" declared Oliver Barnes with emphasis. "And don't forget I'm your friend, little girl. You can count on that!"

They walked on with little more to say, Gayle puzzling over his vehemence, and at last deciding—not entirely to her own satisfaction—that it was Daddy Barnes' way of expressing his affection for her after a two months' absence. But the conversation recurred to her from time to time during the day, occasioning her a vague uneasiness which she herself could not analyze.

That afternoon she stopped at the milliner's to inquire for her aunt's hat, which was undergoing seasonable

remodeling. The usual group of four or five was viewing the new shapes, exchanging gossip and opinions.

As she entered the door, Gayle caught a high-pitched sentence. "Well, if you ask me what I'd do—" which broke abruptly in the middle. An instant later she realized, with a painful, self-conscious blush, that the united gaze of the group had fastened itself upon her. The silence was broken in a moment by Alyce's brushing forward with the hat in her hands.

As Gayle took the box, awkwardly, acutely conscious of the deadening silence, first one and then another of the group greeted her formally, while Agnes Whirlow, a visitor in town whom Gayle had met a time or two and whom she admired in secret because of the luxuriantly coiled amber of her hair, stared with lifted eyebrow at the opposite wall, markedly oblivious of Gayle's glance.

Once on the street again, she found herself trembling with uncontrollable nervousness, hot-cheeked, with a pulse that pounded against her temples. She was not trying now to *analyze*, nor even to comprehend. She wanted to go home. Above everything else in the world she wanted to close behind her the door of her own room, small and familiar and secure.

That night, staring through the darkness at the glimmering blotch which was her window, remembrance of the averted glances, the half-understood phrases and actions, stormed through her mind. She asked herself, and tried to answer with detachment and precision, just what was indicated by these words charged with a poisonous meaning, these carefully unveiled suspicions. What was it that they believed of her who had done no evil, whom they had known all her life? That she had deliberately opened the gas; that she had risen and closed the window and lain down again, deliberately yielding herself to its fumes (she felt

for a moment a sense of nausea as she remembered the fumes); that she had been brought back against her will into a world that had overwhelmed her?

It was evidently something like this that they believed, that they said. But why—why—why? Though she felt that it mattered little, after all, what reason they assigned. They might say any one of a half dozen things—or all of them. The tragedy before which she shuddered was that they could believe she had any reason to run like a criminal from life—she who had lived among them day after day, whom they knew.

Swiftly her mind refused the word with a voluble, angry incoherence. No, they did not know her, they had never known her, and how much less had she known them. Human beings did not know each other. They lived like snails in stony shells, from which, try as they might, they could only peer, inquisitively, misinterpretingly. She had a sudden overwhelming vision of herself, frail and unarmed and hopelessly young, standing up to battle with an invincible foe. It seemed a thing incredible that so many had lived through perilous youth to age. What was youth but a goldfish, an aimless and bewildered bit of life, dashing and dashing around in a little glass bowl? She felt very tired. Her chain of thought dragged, broke, and she fell asleep.

#### IV

"I THOUGHT I'd tell you," ended Mrs. Summers with gusto, "because it seemed to me you ought to know."

Gayle stood staring at her. She had never before noticed that tiny mole at the corner of Veeva Summers' nostril. It paled and deepened as she talked. Gayle watched it fascinated.

"Yes, I thought I'd tell you," repeated the other, her voice a little sharper for the girl's silence, "so that you might get your aunt to let them

know just how it was. There ain't any sense in leaving these things hang over. You know how talk travels."

"Yes, thank you, Mrs. Summers," responded Gayle absently. "It was very kind of you."

After all, she felt that she despised herself for having been seized by that first chill of absolute hopelessness because of what Veeva Summers had just told her—a highly colored version of the accident in which her aunt had found the door locked and had been forced to call for help to batter it open before entering the room where Gayle lay stretched unconscious on the bed. There had been another ugly note in the story—a linking of the accident in point of time (Veeva Summers had been careful here to make her reference to it sound almost casual) with the departure of a clerk whom her uncle had discharged some ten days ago. Gayle felt a sensation of incredibly cold and impersonal disgust. She had scarcely known Edgar Newby. The entire town must have been aware that she scarcely knew him. The entire town must have known that he had been there only a month, had been discharged for dishonesty, had a crooked and hairy nostril. If they believed she had been desperate because of Edgar Newby's leaving, or—for any other reason—Her mind quailed.

As she re-entered the house, she found her aunt and uncle in the dining-room, talking together. She stopped at the door in surprise; she could not remember ever before having seen the two engaged in formal conversation with each other. Both

looked up as she entered. Her aunt spoke after a moment's hesitation.

"Gayle," she said, "you've been working pretty hard lately. We've been wondering if you wouldn't like to go see Nannie for a month or so. She's been wanting you to come for quite a while."

Gayle felt her knees giving way. She steadied herself by an effort of will and turned dumbly toward her uncle. He cleared his throat nervously and fingered his bowtie.

"You've been working pretty hard," he affirmed. "You ought to have a rest—a month or so—"

"I'll go," said Gayle unhesitatingly.

She turned and went upstairs.

For a long time she stared into the mirror. Her own eyes looked back at her with impersonal curiosity. She was not thinking of herself. She was thinking of life. She had not known the world was like this.

Quietly she locked the door and drew down the window-shades. She loosened her clothing and slipped from it into her long white nightgown. She struck a match, then smiled a little at the unconsciousness of the act, extinguishing it. For she had no doubt as to what to do. Deliberately she turned on both cocks of the little heater before lying down. The odor made her shudder a little at first. Not long. The straight walls of the room bent forward an instant, then wavered back out of sight. The world became a fluent gray haze . . . she felt herself sinking, sinking, through a soft medium impalpable as cloud. And then a security, as of strong arms bearing her off through unsteady space. . . .





# Ad Infinitum

*By Charles G. Shaw*

DAY after day the same monotony . . .  
Breakfast . . . Work . . . Lunch . . .  
Work . . . Dinner . . . A Pipe . . . Bed!  
Day after day.  
Why had he ever been born?  
He often asked himself that.

Later, he met a black-eyed girl.  
They are now married, and have five children.



## The Pagan

*By A. Newberry Choyce*

IF I had youth again  
(Be still! I know, I know!)  
I would build a house in a little lane  
Under an apple row.

With a white flower and a red flower  
To blossom by my door,  
And a chink to let the sunlight leap  
At dawn across the floor.

If I had youth again  
(O careless Sweet! be still)  
I would sing on Sunday long holy songs  
In a little church on a hill.

And the grave Saints they would listen  
And approve of my only prayer,  
For what should I do when night came on  
If you were not there!



# Right Makes Might

*By Miffin Crane*

I

ON Sundays Mr. Newth was a church-going man. He spent virtually the whole of every Sunday in church. In denomination he was a Methodist, but he sincerely respected nearly every other Christian sect except the Episcopalian and the Roman Catholic. There was in these denominations too much of ceremonial mystery for him, and too little forthright exhortation. Mr. Newth distrusted them; he distrusted mystery.

On Sunday morning, in company with his wife, he attended the regular preaching service. Hurrying home after service, these two disposed of a swift lunch and went back again for the Sunday School session. Mrs. Newth instructed a class of girls, and her husband devoted himself to the duties of assistant superintendent.

Because of his singing voice he led most of the hymns. He had a dominating tenor of which he was unashamed, so that when he opened his mouth in song considerable noise emerged. Occasionally he neglected the pitch a little; it did not matter; they were not critical.

Every Wednesday evening, again accompanied by his wife, he attended the weekly prayer meeting, where he was esteemed as an extempore pleader. He prayed heartily, he threw back his head against the rim of his collar and addressed God with considerable passion. His specialty was to invoke the interest of the Divine Intervention in foreign peoples less favored with righteousness than the Americanos. Every week

he prayed for the Armenians, the Serbs, the Albanians, the Czecho-Slovakians, the French, the Russians, and even, although with some doubts, for the Germans. Sometimes, growing sectarian, he asked God to enlighten the Pope.

During the week days Mr. Newth engaged himself in the business of interior decorating. That is to say, he was a contracting paper-hanger. He made estimates on jobs, visited them during their execution and instructed his men and was in general a busy man.

A man who recreates himself in the church during the hours conventionally given over to church-going naturally finds a certain sacerdotal flavor in his days at large. Mr. and Mrs. Newth were what you would call "good people." It was, for example, of the parishioners, not of paper-hanging, that they commonly chose to converse during their leisure hours at home. It pleased Mrs. Newth, at times, to be a little critical. Her mind had the habit of sternness; she divined a moral laxness as a cat divines a mouse. Mr. Newth, although a little more charitable, usually agreed with her judgments. It was agreeable to feel, for himself and his wife, a sense of superiority.

But, unluckily, he had the masculine frailty of possessing a touch of romantic imagination. Again, there may have been something a little too unbending, too severe, in his home life. The fervor of his prayers showed that there was an alloy of passion in the man. He fell, therefore, into a dangerous snare.

It happened that he was called into the home of a woman named Waterbury to estimate upon redecorating the

walls. The Waterbury woman, recently widowed from a husband considerably older than himself, was alive with a seductive sense of freedom and long-suppressed desires. For her a decent interval of mourning had passed; she was about to step into life; there was a curious little fire alight in her eyes.

In response to a telephone summons, Mr. Newth called at her home early one afternoon in the spring. In the preliminary moments of conversation he observed that Mrs. Waterbury was an unusually agreeable woman. From very young women he shrank, as from a sense of unfitness. He did not understand the flappers, their frivolities annoyed his dignity, their tricks and ways dismayed him. But Mrs. Waterbury, perhaps not quite forty, was yet old enough to engage his eye.

She was tall, a little angular, and still graceful in her quick movements. There was animation in her manner, an unconventional animation of face and gesture. Her face was just a trifle bold, the brown eyes steady, the full-lipped mouth ready with sudden smiles. She talked rapidly; she used her hands as she talked. This restlessness and vivacity interested him. She was, no doubt, a sort of relief from solemnities that grew a little stale.

Explaining her wishes to Mr. Newth, Mrs. Waterbury eyed him with an interested scrutiny and found his presentment agreeable. In this way Mr. Newth was an impressive man. He had the air of prosperity and even authority. His features expressed firmness and at the same time an unexpected mobility leavened them. Wearing the crystals of a pince-nez over his gray eyes, he acquired an intellectual manner. His brownish hair, still abundant, was meticulously parted a little on one side and smoothed down until it glistened. He was tall, and robust enough to look important.

They walked together from room to room in the house, examining the walls, talking about the business in hand. But there was a faint overtone of suggestion in the eyes, in the smiles of the

woman that Newth apprehended and felt. It did not displease him, and still, to a degree, it made him shrink. He was not, in fact, wholly sure of himself. In the presence of such a woman he was not robustly conscious of his unassailable virtue.

Their examination of the rooms terminated in the kitchen. Here, after determining the final details of the work, Mrs. Waterbury smiled with a swift little air of mystery and opened the door of a closet. From this she withdrew a quart bottle, unlabeled, containing a dark red fluid.

"A friend just gave me this today," she said. "It's home-made wine. Wouldn't you like a little glass before you go, Mr. Newth?"

This was, for Newth, an opportunity to stiffen the slight, indefinable wavering of his virtue, a sense of weakness felt only by a kind of intuition. His head went back a little, his lips became firm and he shook his head.

"I don't drink wine, Mrs. Waterbury," he said.

She smiled immediately. Her face was illuminated with a pleased surprise, as if he had imparted a bit of stimulating news.

"Is that so!" she exclaimed. "You don't approve of it? You think it is harmful?"

There was something so gracious and solicitous in her questions that Newth discovered himself at once disarmed of his severity. Instead of admitting his moral scruples, he seized on the cue she afforded and explained his objection on medical grounds, in terms of the liver and arteries. She listened with a bright interest. She nodded her head understandingly. It was as if he expounded an utterly new thing, an arresting originality.

"You must be right," she murmured. "I'm careless; I never think whether a thing will hurt my health or not. I'm the same about things to eat. Roast pork, for instance, doesn't agree with me at all, and yet I persist in eating it. One should have more self-control, shouldn't one?"

They spoke of dietetics and self-control. . . .

## II

MR. NEWTH's rectitude was assailed in his subsequent contacts with Elsie Waterbury by a subtle and complex antagonism. He could have successfully repelled a bold assault, a more brutal strategy, but he was, alas, exposed to dangers against which his defenses were inadequate.

She was a flattering, receptive woman; she soothed and charmed him by her deferential way. She attended his remarks with a strangely alive interest. On his coming to oversee the progress of his workmen, she walked with him through the rooms, consulting him and receiving his suggestions with that touch of agreeable reverence accorded an old-time master by his disciples. Then, projected into these consultations, were her sudden, disarming smiles; instant smiles that were not complementary to their talk, extraneities that suggested a fascinating, underlying intimacy.

In the beginning Newth admitted nothing to himself. If his blood quickened a little, if his pulse bounded for a moment in an unwonted way, he allowed these phenomena no significance. His first direct admission of an extra-professional interest came, not by a thought, but in an act. He called to see Mrs. Waterbury when all the work was completed, when he knew that it was over and satisfactory. He persuaded himself that this was a matter of business, that he went only to insure the good-will of a customer, and thereby he evaded the truth. That visit was unnecessary. He was impelled to it solely by a romantic want.

That time, for the first time, they spoke of other things than matters of interior decoration. Mrs. Waterbury entertained him in her sitting-room, now bright with flowers blooming fresh on the walls, pictures rehung, cushions brodered in colored silks poised here and there on the chairs. She attacked him with a single bold thrust; she said she hoped they would remain

friends. Then she began to tell him of her life.

She spoke of her husband, admitted his virtues as a man, and then tempered her praise with an intimate disclosure of her own unhappiness.

"It's wrong," she said, "to marry a man much older than yourself. You know that, Mr. Newth. No one can say that a woman is ever happy with an old man. A woman wants—well, I don't know just how to put it, suppose I say emotions! She feels that life owes something to her heart."

She cast her eyes downward; they were sad.

"I've felt that I've been cheated," she murmured. "That there's something in me I've longed to give—and haven't given!"

Those words, after he had left her, elaborated themselves in the mind of Mr. Newth. They were, in their way, revealing; they seemed to show him the warm heart of a woman, to open a long-closed door, to bring him to the threshold of a fascinating possibility.

Her words dwelt in his imagination like a sweet virus. He could not dispossess himself of her declaration, "I haven't given!" It was as if something virginal were offered him; there was the deep flattery of the thought that he might be the first to truly know her.

Mr. Newth could not prevail against these subtleties, these new and strange stimulations. Suddenly, one day, he capitulated.

He had called; they were sitting together at an opened window that looked out on the little garden behind her house. The trees were bright with new leaves; there were fragrances from the fields mingled with the city airs. They had been talking, and then, in a silent moment, Newth discovered himself filled with a profound surprise.

He became acutely aware of his strange environment. He sat near a woman; there was invitation in her downcast eyes, and a strange, romantic urge in his heart. This was an amazing freedom, a new life! It was an immensely novel experience, wholly apart

from his accustomed hours and their ways—the little dry affairs of business, the scornful gossip of his wife, the stiff correctness of his home, the certitudes of his church. In the affairs of life he had distrusted mystery; now a mystery charmed him. And his suppressions clamoured for expression.

He took up her hand in a clumsy way and she turned to him; she was in his arms in an instant. Holding her, he discovered more than a crude delight of his senses. He was conscious of a unique pride. Proud once of his superior rectitude, he was now naively proud of his sinfulness. He was clever, he was a dissembler; moving among his friends in his former guise, he would deceive them; he nourished a great secret!

### III

THE spring passed into early summer and something in her husband, something vaguely displeasing, began to puzzle Mrs. Newth.

She observed, first, an unusual light in his eye, a sort of exulting gleam. Then, sometimes, he smiled at her in a way she did not understand. He seemed to grow vain. She discovered him watching in front of his mirror with an intentness that astonished her. Once she came suddenly into their bedroom and surprised him in a little shuffle, a kind of untutored clog dance, that deprived him of all dignity.

Nevertheless, he was firm in his professions of faith. He went with her to church on Sunday mornings and again to Sunday School. He bellowed the hymns with full lungs, sometimes a diminished second off the pitch. He prayed loudly at prayer meeting, for the Turks, for the Bulgarians, for the yellow races of the world. In these things he was unaltered.

The warm days began; they began to plan for the summer. In New Jersey, on a small creek that emptied into the river, they owned a little isolated bungalow; here they usually sequestered themselves for a week or two every July. Vaguely troubled about her hus-

band, Mrs. Newth was anxious that they go to this place early in the season; it seemed to her that Newth required a rest.

Mrs. Newth had promised to spend a week with her sister in Delaware. It was arranged, through her insistence, that she should keep this promise at once and that they should take their vacation immediately upon her return.

In the beginning Newth unaccountably opposed her plan. He seemed remarkably reluctant to leave the city. Then, with a disconcerting abruptness, as if something mysterious had happened to alter his attitude, he withdrew all his objections. He showed an almost naïve eagerness for his wife's departure. She pondered this, but found no solution of the puzzle.

The trip was arranged; he took her to the railroad station. He kissed her good-bye, turned a moment later and waved to her, and then walked off into the crowd. At the gate to her train she paused a moment and looked after him. She observed that his step was buoyant, almost boyish. He looked from right to left; he seemed to look at the women whom he passed!

A sudden, devastating suspicion entered the mind of Mrs. Newth. It was a suspicion that explained her puzzle, that enlightened her. However unbelievable, having once entertained it, it possessed her like a passion. Her cheeks flushed, her narrow lips pressed tightly one upon the other. She hesitated only a moment, and then, abandoning the gate, she walked quickly after the departing Mr. Newth.

He was now lost to her in the crowd. She stood outside the station, looking up and down the street. Then, hurrying to the corner, she took the first trolley car homeward.

She entered her home quietly, closing the door behind her without a sound. In the hall she stood and listened. There were noises above; Newth was moving about; his feet walked rapidly over the floor; she heard him whistling.

He came out into the hall above and she retired into the parlor, concealing



herself behind the curtains that covered the door. He descended the stairs. She peered out from behind the curtains and saw him carrying his satchel in his hand. Availing himself of her absence, he was about to go away somewhere! Where? With whom?

She heard him close the front door and she followed at once, opened it, and looked down the street. He was walking rapidly; he was already half way to the corner. Mrs. Newth, with tight lips, stepped out and followed behind him.

He turned at the corner; she turned a moment later. He walked four or five blocks and then entered one of the houses on the street. Mrs. Newth stood at the corner and watched. She watched with an exalted indignation in her heart. Of the perfidiousness of men she knew something; of their shamelessness she had surmised much; but these failings she had never associated with Newth! A great moral strength sustained her. She would follow, anywhere, to any place. She would discover all!

Nearly half an hour passed, and then she saw her husband come out. Now he carried two satchels. He was accompanied by a woman!

In this instant of entire revelation, Mrs. Newth had a potent wish to run after these two and, arresting them in their flight, lash them with her indignant words, shame them before the eyes and ears of all the world. She restrained herself.

She saw them wait at the corner for the street car. She understood that they were going to the railroad station. The car came; they entered it. Mrs. Newth walked to the corner and waited for the next car.

When she reached the station she walked into the train shed cautiously, following behind the concealing backs of two men who strolled in front of her. In a moment she caught sight of Newth and his shameless woman. They stood near one of the unopened gates; they talked eagerly one to the other; she saw them laugh. Then she experienced a new shock: Newth was waiting for a

train to take him to their own bungalow!

Mrs. Newth turned back into the waiting-room. She dropped upon one of the benches, a great weakness enveloping her. Her eyes grew moist, her strength deserted her, she was weak. All the sureties had departed from her life; God himself had deserted her. She found herself pitiful; she had not, a good woman, deserved this pain.

Then, a little by a little, her strength was renewed. Her moral determination was returned to her, like a strong tide that flows back after the ebb. In her virtue she felt herself strong. Her indignation centered itself, not upon Newth, but upon the woman. He was weak, and for his weakness she despised him. But the woman was perfidious. But, whatever were the strengths of her evil charms, Mrs. Newth felt herself strong to defeat them.

She arose and, hurrying to the window, bought herself a ticket.

#### IV

NEWTH stood near an open window watching Elsie as she laid the table for their first dinner in the bungalow. They had been there for several hours; the twilight was coming on, a few crickets were beginning to sing. He smiled as he watched her, but behind his smile he was conscious of a regret. It occurred to him that they had only a week together, and this time seemed too short! A great rebellion filled his heart. Although free in this moment, his limitations chafed him like thongs about his limbs. He wanted this freedom always, these romantic moments. He felt that he could liberate himself entirely, abandon all his old respectabilities, the whole accustomed way of his life. He felt the stirring emotions of an adventurer engaging in some prodigious gamble.

Absorbed in his strange thoughts, he did not hear the noise of someone passing up the gravel walk to the porch. He heard, however, a step on the porch, and, startled, he turned and took a step toward the door. Before he advanced

the door opened. Someone came in. Mrs. Waterbury looked up at him in questioning surprise. Without speaking they both looked toward the door.

And into the frame of the open door came Mrs. Newth.

She was a small woman, a little desiccated, it seemed, within her clothes. Her face was thin, her lips meagre, her eyebrows straight, her eyes small and black like jet beads. She stood on the threshold, stared at Newth a moment, and then fastened her eyes upon the woman.

Newth was appalled. His heart stopped, the tips of his fingers grew cold, the color went out of his face. There were no words on his tongue; he was like an animal that has never known the gift of speech.

And then he was filled with a hot rebellion. He, too, was indignant. The little, dry woman in the doorway symbolized all the dry days of his life. He would not accept those ways again. He threw back his head, he expanded his chest, he walked toward her.

"Louisa," he asked, "what are you doing here?"

She met his eyes, she tried to freeze him with her beady stare.

"What are you doing here!" she repeated bitterly. "You, and this . . . this *shameless woman!*"

Elsie, clutching the edge of the table, stiffened, her eyes narrowed, her face, as if reflecting an inner defensive reaction, grew haughty.

As his wife accused her, Newth flushed with anger.

"I didn't ask you here, Louisa," he said. "You came here, you followed me, you sneaked after me. Mrs. Waterbury is my guest; you haven't the right to insult her. I won't let you insult her. She's not going to leave. You'd better leave yourself. I didn't intend that you'd know about this; it's your own fault that you've discovered. Well, you've found out what you wanted to know; now you can go away satisfied. I'm going to stay here."

He spoke fluently; he was surprised at his own bravado. His wife listened

without a word. As she listened, a profound resolution came into her face. No weakness betrayed itself there; she seemed sustained by a consciousness of an abounding strength.

She walked into the room, and slowly removed her hat. Newth stared at her. She did not speak.

"What are you going to do?" he asked, finally.

"I'm going to stay too," she said.

Elsie made a despairing gesture and took a swift step around the table. Coloring again, Newth seized her arm.

"You're not going, Elsie," he said. "I've told Louisa that I intended to stay here, with *you!* If she wants to stay let her do so. Sooner or later she'll decide that it's best to go. I've made my choice. I've chosen you."

He spoke with a kind of high fervor; his voice intoned his words in much the same style as he prayed, for the Bohemians, the Herzegovinians, the Poles. His arms moved about in broad gestures; he was exalted.

The woman looked into his face, and observing his exaltation, a deep look of admiration came into her eyes. It was, for her, a great romantic moment. He was renouncing, for her, everything—his wife, his home, his good name. She clung to his arm, she pressed close to him.

Mrs. Newth looked at them. There was no sign of weakness in her face.

## V

LIKE actors in an unpleasant farce, the three drew up their chairs and sat down to supper. A lamp, suspended by chains over the table, illuminated the room with a central area of yellow light. The light shone brightly into their faces at the table.

No one spoke. Outwardly determined, his face still firm with his former romantic resolution, Newth was within him a little shaken. A few doubts began to harass him. The hard, unyielding eyes of his wife aroused occasional vague fears. At times he was conscious of a sense of folly.

Mrs. Waterbury toyed nervously with her plate. Mostly she kept her eyes on the cloth; when she raised her eyes she looked at Newth. She observed the determination in his face. She was again conscious of his thrilling sacrifice. Yet she felt herself weak. The unwavering stare of the little woman opposite enfeebled her romantic mood.

This little, dry woman exasperated her. Again and again she assured herself that she was a free woman, that she was taking the man she loved, that no one was strong enough to come between them. And yet an unaccountable strength emanated like a potent, invisible ray from the eyes of the other woman, Newth's wife.

Mrs. Newth did not speak. She divined the fruitlessness of words. But into her eyes she summoned all the assurance of her moral certitude, her immense sense of right. There was no hesitation in her certainty. She toyed with no romantic doubts, no sentimental excusing of her husband's act. There was, she knew, in this affair a single right and a single wrong, and she was *right!*

Mrs. Waterbury tried to avoid her beady, unwavering eyes. Yet they burned on her cheeks, she felt them dwelling terribly upon her face, and her cheeks grew hot with unwelcome shame.

Suddenly, Mrs. Waterbury stood up. Her chair fell backward, striking the floor with a dull report. She covered her eyes for an instant, pressing the backs of her slim hands tight against them as if to shut out some intolerable sight.

"I can't stay!" she cried. "I can't!"

She ran toward the door; she hurried out like one escaping a grave danger, into the night. Newth struggled half up out of his chair, as if to detain her. Then he sank back again. The eyes of his wife were upon him. He was weak. He was defeated.

She looked at him. She comprehended nothing of his romantic urge, his moment of imagination, the little lyric he had surprisingly discovered. Her face was disdainful. And, above all, her face was triumphant. The triumphant strength of assured rectitude shone cold and strong out of her face.



**B** LONDE—a woman whose hair is lighter than it used to be.



**T** HE woman who giggled at thirty rouges at sixty.



**W** ITH women, be bold but don't get fresh.

# The Happiest Time

By Dorothea Brande

I

UNTIL Eunice was ten years old it seemed to her that someone was always patting her on the head and saying wistfully, "Childhood's the happiest time!" . . . Funny little thing, with eyes too big for her small head! What did she mean by staring at one so solemnly and never smiling back? No child ever had kindlier parents than Tom and Milly Reynolds. . . . It was dreadful till Eunice learned that they were lying; dreadful to think that she would never be any happier than this!

Every Saturday morning Eunice stood before the kitchen cabinet and heard her mother give the long grocery list. Ingrid stirred about in the back-ground, washing dishes, straightening up, peering now and then into the oven, from which came Arcadian gusts of warm, vanilla-scented air—the Sunday night chocolate layer-cake was baking in that dark fastness. Milly stood erect beside the cabinet, her plump forefinger against her lip, her grave considering eyes on the Krebs's morning-glory trellis, while she gave Axel her order. Axel's overshoes creaked up the snow-covered back steps in winter, and the noise of his stamping and blowing in the entry always brought Milly from her sheet-changing activities above-stairs with Eunice at her heels. The cold outdoor air felt fresh and sweet in the steamy kitchen.

Every Saturday morning Eunice lived through a crisis. Axel, for all he was so big, was only in the sixth grade of her school; every day she saw him in

the cinder-covered schoolyard. Saturday mornings he always said genially, "Hello, Eune," and each Saturday morning Eunice, covered with blushes, said "Hello, Axel," while Milly frowned and stiffened her face at Eunice and shook her head a very little, almost imperceptibly. Milly believed that Axel should speak to her daughter in the same ambiguously respectful tone which Ingrid used toward her; but the democracy of the schoolyard was already as much of a reality to Eunice as her mother's ideas of propriety.

"And see if you can get me a nice piece of fat salt pork," Milly always ended. Then Axel creaked away and Eunice went through her ordeal.

"I don't like it! Such familiarity! I shouldn't allow it!"

"He's in Miss Kelleher's room, mama, I told you. I know him in school."

Whenever it happened, Eunice felt excited and ready to cry. She suffered agonies of humiliation—for Axel, victim of her mother's terrible disapproval, and for her mother, whom Axel would consider, with justice, "stuck up." But Saturdays, when Milly gave her kitchen its weekly inspection, stirred up the brown bread and parboiled the next day's beans, was the only day the kitchen was permitted to Eunice. Shut off from the front hall by a ground-glass door, all week long it was Ingrid's inviolable territory. But the baking of the beans was a family ceremony, and Saturday mornings Eunice surveyed the Krebs's house from the unfamiliar angle of the kitchen window.

Every Sunday morning of her life, until she was married, Milly had seen

beans and brown bread on the breakfast table. For two years she had been an exile among the beaten biscuit and Lady Baltimore cakes of her husband's family, and it had been a hardship. The first Sunday she had ever spent in this house of her own, on the southern rim of Chicago, she had re-instituted, almost with solemnity, the Saturday baking of beans. To Milly the corner of the earth that held her would be forever New England.

Every Sunday morning, summer and winter, spring and fall, opened with the steaming pyramid of beans before Tom and the two cylindrical rolls of brown bread before Milly. And on the fragrant odor of coffee Tom's grace was borne aloft to a beneficent heaven:

"Father, we thank Thee for this food. Bless it to the upbuildings of our bodies. Amen."

And on the same instant they stirred into life. Tom skimmed the dry beans from the top of the pyramid for Eunice, who hated the intimacy of the moister ones with the dreadful pallid pork. Milly sliced the brown bread and asked, invariably:

"Two pieces, Tom?"

"I guess I'll just have them on my plate with some of this gravy."

Filmore, the renegade, always asked: "Can Ingrid bring some white bread, mama?"

"Let's give Ingrid some of these beans while they're still hot," Tom said.

Milly did not approve of so much consideration of servants, but still less did she approve of a divided parental front. Her face stiffened as it did in the Saturday morning passage between Axel and Eunice, but she tinkled the little bell that stood among the teacups till Ingrid wedged one shoulder and her broad face inquiringly in at the pantry door.

"Bring a little white bread, please, Ingrid," said Milly in her cool and civil "servant's tone." "And if you'd like to bring a plate, Mr. Reynolds will give you some beans while they're warm."

Ingrid went and returned presently to slap down half a dozen slices of bread

before Fil on her way to the head of the table. She stood aside contemptuously and held her plate at arm's length under Tom's nose, while he filled it with the beans she despised.

Milly kept her eyes down all the while. She hardly knew, herself, what there was in Tom's jovial recognition of her maid's humanity that so annoyed her. Having a maid had been, all her life, her symbol of affluence; it meant to Milly a delightfully superior state. But ever since they could afford a girl to help, Tom's affectation of the bluff-and-hearty manner had robbed her of her anticipated joy. Impossible to feel superior to the forthright Swedish girls who enjoyed Tom's joking and would not learn to call the children Miss and Master. She liked better the obsequiousness of her occasional Irish maids, which she despised even in her enjoyment, but her New England soul abhorred their slackness and lies, and their inexplicable and stubborn adherence to their ritualistic Church.

## II

THE spectre of imminent church-going hovered over the late breakfast. Tom and the three children each had a section of the Sunday paper, but not one of them was hardy enough to read at the table, although from time to time Claudia stole glances at the dramatic news on her knees, and Tom reached for and rejected wistfully the main news sheet, crushed between himself and the arm of his chair.

The citadel of Milly's righteousness in barring Sunday papers had fallen less than six months before, when it was demonstrated to her that the Sunday newspapers entailed the Sabbath labors of only the delivery boy, whereas Monday's paper which she had read so placidly for years was the real fruit of Sabbath-breaking by an entire newspaper staff. Milly succumbed, but she still felt that she had been beaten by specious argument, and not even Tom dared read his morning's news at Sunday morning breakfast.



Filmore and Eunice, according to an elaborate system of hostage and redemption, each held the section of the paper dearest to the other. Fil's morning was a desert waste until he had pondered the activities of the Katzenjammers, but he sat on the magazine section, which, because of the prize awards and puzzles on the back page, was Eunice's heart's desire. He looked across the table at her now, managing to convey by means of hastily crossed eyes and an abnormal vigor of mastication his cherished sense of her chagrin. Eunice had spent hours answering last week's puzzles, and she longed to search among the hundred names in small type for *E. Reynolds*; no one knew that she had sent in the answers. She would have been drawn and quartered before she would have given her father and Fil that priceless opportunity for baiting.

"Eat your breakfast, Baby," Milly counseled.

"Make Fil give me the magazine!" Eunice burst out. "He's sitting on it."

"Fil, are you teasing your little sister again?"

"No'm. She's got the funny sheet," Fil disclaimed righteously.

Assured that the situation balanced, Milly said: "Eat your breakfast, Eunice," again, and lapsed into consideration of her innumerable problems.

"Claud's reading, Mamma," said Eunice, after excitement by fair means or foul.

"Sneak!" cried Claudia, venomously.

"Claudia!" exclaimed Tom and Milly together.

Claudia slid her ice-colored eyes around at Eunice vengefully. She pushed back her chair from the table.

"Please may I be excused?" she rattled.

"Why, you haven't half-eaten your breakfast!" cried Milly, dismayed.

"Please may I be excused?" Claudia repeated monotonously, pulling down her mouth.

Milly could not cope with the most elementary aspects of dignity in her own children.

"Get ready for church now," she said,

consenting, and Claudia switched out of the room, her long braid swinging.

"Now aren't you ashamed?" she chided.

"Yes'm," said Eunice complacently.

"If you've had all the breakfast you want, you can be excused and go black your shoes," Milly said.

Eunice rushed upstairs.

Claudia was reading on the window seat. She looked up at Eunice, grimaced to denote extreme contempt, and went back to her paper without a word. Eunice swung on the door.

"Claud's mad and I'm glad," she began to chant.

"Well, you are a sneak," Claudia said dispassionately.

"I'll tell Mamma, I'll tell Mamma," Eunice sang.

"And I'll get the devil for it," Claudia capped coolly.

"Oh, you said 'devil'!" cried Eunice.

"Tell her that, too, why don't you?" asked Claudia. "Mamma and Dad are lots more afraid of words than they are of being things. They're lots more afraid of my saying 'sneak' than of your being one. We can't say 'sneak' or 'fool' or 'murder' or 'die'—"

"Or 'beer' or 'saloon'," said Eunice, the turncoat, adding to the list of words that were anathema among the Reynolds.

They heard the chairs scraping back in the dining-room below and looked at each other like conspirators.

"You listen," said Claudia under her breath. She went back to reading her paper.

"Claudia! Aren't you dressing?" cried Milly, at the door.

Claudia stretched her long arms.

"I'd rather die than go to church," she said.

The effect on Tom and Milly was instantaneous.

"What do you mean by saying such a thing?" cried Milly, while Tom shouted, "What are you thinking of?"

"I said you'd act like that," Claudia said, cryptically.

"I'll not have any such talk in my house!" Tom roared.

Eunice unbuttoned her shoes with

trembling fingers. She was afraid of words, too. Claud might really die for saying that!

"Oh, all right," said Claudia to Tom, contemptuously.

"I want to speak to you in my room," Milly said.

"Oh, Mamma," cried Claudia, passionately, "I know every single thing you're going to say. Oh, it makes me sick! We tiptoe around and say 'sweet, sweet, sweet,' and we're afraid to say 'blood' or 'dead' or any words like that, just as if not saying things could make them stop happening. And it can't, Mamma, it can't, and you know it, and I'm going to say them if I like."

Tom was frightened and angry, but Milly stood looking at her with a wooden, enigmatic face.

"You'd better stay home and lie down, I guess," she said. "Come, baby; hurry!"

Eunice got up and followed her mother to have her hair braided. She felt sick with excitement, and she was afraid of Milly's expressionless face. Claudia's courage had called to courage and been rebuffed.

"Why can't we, Mamma?" Eunice whispered.

"Why can't we what?" Milly asked, with disingenuous sharpness. "Stand still, now!"

"What Claude said," Eunice persisted.

"Because such things aren't nice to talk about," Milly said briskly. "Let's not have any more of that; Claudia's a naughty girl." Eunice's troubled silence goaded her on. "It makes poor Papa so unhappy."

Even that bordered on treachery and it was unilluminating to Eunice. It was the best Milly could do; she had no way of conveying the idea that Tom's anger was the expression of Tom's fear, and that once to admit the validity of pain or death or sickness would bring his house of cards down about his ears. He would have to face, then, Milly's suffering when his children were born, the possibility of suffering for himself, and the admission of his mortality.

Outside the road was dazzling white

with untracked Sunday snow. While Milly brushed and braided in silence Eunice listened to the rasping scrape of snow-shovels. Milly pushed her away gently at last.

"There. Get your rubbers and leg-gings on." Her voice was soft with tenderness and pity.

### III

CLAUDIA came out of her room, her sixteen-year-old braids wound in Sunday decorum around her head, smoothing on her shiny, tan gloves. Her face was as set and wooden as Milly's own.

"I'm not sick, Mamma," she said. "I might as well go to church, I guess."

Eunice regarded her with mingled disgust and admiration. The disgust was against Claudia as a traitor in the long war of children against parents; who but a girl of unsound mind would throw aside the priceless privilege of staying home from church? The admiration was unaccountable; Filmore did not share it.

"Oh, cheel!" he cried in derision, and slid down the bannisters. "Come on, Eune; I'll beat you to the corner."

"Filmore! Children! Not on Sunday!" cried Milly, vainly.

However mad Fil's challenge, Eunice never failed to accept it.

At the corner, winner by the length of two houses, Filmore waited.

"You got your name in the paper," he said. "Honorable mention. You'll get a Foxy Grandpa slate."

Eunice, bursting with pride, regarded him cautiously. Impossible to know how Fil was going to take her eminence; but Foxy Grandpa was the hero of one of Fil's comic pages, and he was openly envious.

"Give you a nickel for it," he offered.

"I guess not!" Eunice said, her brain not entirely befogged by this realization of her dreams.

She walked along in a happy coma, overcome by the prospect of forty-eight hours possible ascendancy over Fil. She laid plans to dream away the sermon

and to slip out of Sunday School as soon as she got her library book.

Fil pulled open the door of the church. The smell of musty matting rushed out from the unsunned vault of the Sunday School room; that smell was "the odor of sanctity" to Eunice. Mr. Todd stood beside the broad stairs; he smelled of fresh linen and bay rum, and he bowed genially to Eunice as he handed her the folder with "The Order of Services" on it.

Eunice liked the folders because they increased her feeling of importance so tremendously: Tom's name was on the back three times, Milly's once and Claudia's once. Thomas Reynolds was treasurer of the church, an elder and a trustee. Mrs. Thomas Reynolds was president of the Ladies' Aid. Miss Claudia Reynolds was president of the Y. P. S. C. E. Eunice intended to work hard for the office of president of the Junior Christian Endeavor; it had become a sporting matter to get the name of Reynolds on the back page of the leaflet as many times as possible.

The organ voluntary throbbed and pulled in Eunice's ears. She walked demurely, but with a sense of drama, down the aisle beside Fil. The church room was high and light and ugly as a factory loft. The light and the throbbing of the organ always gave Eunice a headache; the red velvet aisle carpet with maroon figures was no relief. The pews were of golden oak with pressed-wood scrolls, and they had maroon cushions, uncomfortably tufted with buttons. The walls were bare and painted a pale buff. The only relief was in the two stenciled texts, one over the choir entrance, the other over the pastor's study: "He died that we might live," and "The Lord is risen." Week after week Eunice read them with no sense of wonder or awe.

After the long organ voluntary the door of the pastor's study opened and Dr. McCormick hurried out. His short legs would bend ridiculously coming down the steep stairs to the platform, his frock coat would balloon out like the skirts of a dervish. He was short

and puffy; he had, somewhat, Milly's look of knowing things he would not tell. It made him sound, not sincere, but suave. He grasped either side of the pulpit with his fat, cylindrical fingers while the choir sang the *Te Deum*; no wonder or praise in that for Eunice, either.

The choir sang:

"Praise. God. From. Whom. All. Bless. Ings. Flow."

Looking about to see who had come to church and who had stayed home. There was a chance that the hymn after the silent prayer might be a good one: say, "Come, Thou Almighty King," or "How Firm a Foundation." But after the hymn and the responsive reading the service was as arid waste to Eunice, brightened only by watching Dr. McCormick's face change from green to yellow, from scarlet to blue, as the traveling sun crossed the stained glass of the huge rose window. Eunice dreamed happily of *E. Reynolds* among the honorably mentioned.

Her plan of rushing home from Sunday School was foiled. Filmore, clairvoyant, sacrificed himself on the altar of keeping Eunice in line, and surveyed her afar with a sardonic eye till the last gabbled, "The Lord watch between me and thee while we are absent one from another," was over.

He met her on the snow-covered threshold.

"Thought you'd ditch, didn't ya?" he asked sternly.

"I don't care," Eunice said. "If you keep the paper now, I'll tell mamma you're teasing."

With his victory suddenly tasteless, "Take your old paper; who's stopping you?" asked Filmore, and whooped off after a passing sleigh.

#### IV

When Eunice went into the house she heard the murmur of her mother's voice going on and on above stairs. She stopped in the hall to listen; reproachful and admonitory, it rose and fell with hurt insistence. She heard

Claudia, abrupt and hard and unhappy—poor Claud, getting it for saying she'd rather die than go to church.

Shivering with nervousness, Eunice searched the parlor for the paper Fil had hidden, but her name at the end of the column did not look glamorous. She went to the sofa and put her head in a cushion. Milly, who thought herself the mildest of mothers, the worst punishment in whose category was what she called "a good talking-to," would have been astonished to learn that the sound of her voice raised in admonition left her children quivering and sick.

Through her muffing cushions Eunice heard the door of her mother's front room open and close, and knew that the ordeal was over. She had been hurrying to tell her mother the triumph of the prize award, but the desire for Milly's approval had drained away in those minutes on the couch; Milly was too terrible a figure for light approach. She went on tiptoe to Claudia's room. Claudia stood before her dresser, looking down at the sturdy, miscellaneous things there. Eunice hung in the doorway, her throat thick with her inarticulate sympathy.

"I got my name in the paper, Claud," she said at last. "For answering puzzles."

"Who cares," said Claudia, dully. But she added at once: "That's fine, baby. You're a smart thing."

"Oh, Claud!" cried Eunice.

She was incapable of another word, but she went and put her arm around Claudia's waist and her cheek as high as she could reach against Claudia's little bony hip.

Claudia burst out passionately, "She makes you say things you don't mean! She makes you tell lies to get away!"

"How?" asked Eunice. "How can she make you say what you don't mean?"

"She always does!" cried Claudia. "I'll bet she made you say you were ashamed this morning, and you weren't! Now she says she guess' college is undermining my faith and the best thing

for me to do is to go back to my music. She knew; she knew I'd say *anything* not to take violin again and to stay in college."

"Why don't you want to take violin?" Eunice asked, sentimentally. "Before you were born mother dreamed and dreamed that you were going to be a great musician." The family story came glibly.

"Yes, she *dreamed* about it!" Claudia said, viciously. "That's about all she did do to make a violinist of me. She didn't do a single thing right! All the music I heard was Moody and Sankey Gospel Hymns and silly old part songs in school, and I never had a violin in my hands till I was twelve years old. I might work and work the rest of my life and I'd never play a thing worth hearing. And I've *told* her a million times that my ear isn't true!"

"Well, why don't you *listen*?" asked Eunice, impatiently, whose judgment of tone was keen and exacting. "Then you wouldn't always sharp."

"Yes, and look at you! You might get somewhere with music, but she has all her lame ducks teaching you piano till you're no farther ahead than you were two years ago, when you started. You'll still be playing 'Airs from Martha' when you're twenty!" Claudia slammed down a hairbrush on the wooden top of the dresser and began to sing hysterically and mockingly.

*"Ah-ah, so puh!*

*Ah-ah-ah, so bright!"*

"Claud, don't!" Eunice whispered, frightened. "You'll get it again!"

The door of Milly's room opened and she came down the hall. Eunice shrank from looking at her with fearful curiosity, but when she did she saw that Milly looked no happier than Claudia.

"Get tidy before papa comes dear," she said, hesitating and gentle, to Claudia. "Mom's baby!" she said to Eunice. Suddenly the ice around Eunice's heart melted and she vaulted into her mother's arms.

"I got a prize for answering puzzles," she whispered, in a torrent, feeling traitor to Claudia, who stood white and still before her mirror.

"Well, bless your heart, you smart baby!" cried Milly. "Papa'll be so proud he won't know what to do! I guess you're a pretty happy girl! Did you hear that, Claudia?"

"Yes'm; she told me," Claudia said, coolly, rejoicing to hurt Milly.

\* \* \*

That was being happy: love and scorn of Claudia, love and fear of Milly, wonder at Tom and the inexplicable Fil. It was just a little slate. In two days they all forgot it.



## A Romance of Yesteryear

*By André Saville*

**I** HAVE just emptied the little walnut chest of all its contents. The little old chest that has been in the attic all these years. What memories awaken!

A lace handkerchief still retaining that same scent, a broken fan with faded plumes, a dance card with the name of a girl written seven times upon it, a wilted powder puff, a little white kid glove—crumpled and torn—a lock of auburn hair, a veil of openwork crêpe . . . a wedding announcement stained with tears.



**F**RIENDSHIP is impossible between a man and a woman; for, unless he becomes more than a friend, she becomes less.



**T**HOSE who fall in love the oftenest are the happiest; those who stay in love the longest are the saddest.



**I**T is just as easy to deceive two women at the same time as the same woman twice, but more expensive.





SS May 1922

## Mr. Shaw's Play For Night-Watchmen

*By George Jean Nathan*

### I

**G**EORGE BERNARD SHAW'S "Back to Methuselah" requires eleven hours for its playing. The Theatre Guild divided it into three sections and produced them seriatim. The first section ran until long after midnight; the second section did the same; and the third section, so far as I know, is still running. As a result of attending the play in pursuit of my critical duties, I suffered three cramps from maintaining one position for four consecutive hours, a touch of lumbago from the early morning wind blowing through a crack in an exit door near my chair, a severe case of eye-strain, the wearing out of one trousers' seat, a leg that went to sleep twice, a sore elbow from leaning for five hours on the arm of my chair, a stiff neck, an attack of trigeminal neuralgia from an inflammation of the fifth nerve due to an open door back stage during the enactment of Part II which permitted chill blasts of midnight air to blow upon me, a sore throat doubtless caused by the same thing, with a resultant attack of bronchitis, a sore knee from pressing for four hours on two occasions against the seat in front of me, nervous debility from lack of sleep, ear-ache from listening to the roarings of the actor who played the rôle of Cain in the Mesopotamia scene, a lame back, two other pairs of trousers made excessively baggy at the knees from crossing my legs for eight hours, and a boredom that

has not been equalled since I read the play in book form.

There comes a day in almost every writer's life when he concludes that it is time for him to put solid ground under his reputation by writing a thick book. A thick book, for some reason or other, is always regarded very seriously by most persons, no matter whether its content is good or bad. However stupid its matter, it has an air of importance and authority that fetches the general run of people, and the professional critics no less. Many a writer without particular talent and without an idea worth listening to has gained fame and position by the simple device of putting out a volume of cyclopedic bulk. Any book containing 850 pages, printed on heavy paper and bound sedately in either very dark green or black cloth is pretty certain to be accepted with an immense soberness by those who read it and, even more, by those who merely look at it. For one man who has actually read Wells' "Outline of History," there are a dozen who consider it a very great work solely on the ground that, glimpsing it in a book-seller's window, they have observed that it weighs about three pounds and is considerably bigger than anything that Nietzsche ever published. It is perhaps safe to say that no one would ever have taken the late William De Morgan with one-half the seriousness with which he was taken had he written novels of the average length. What makes Thackeray, Balzac and a dozen other writers important in the

eyes of nine-tenths of the human race is the fact that each of them takes up at least four feet on the bookcase shelf.

Many a writer has gained a reputation on the weight of a book rather than its contents. A little book, however high its merit, is seldom taken with half the seriousness that is accorded a dull, fat book. Shaw, appreciating the fact as all writers appreciate it, thus connected this "Back to Methuselah." Tedious, turgid, repetitious and often chaotic though it is, it is certain, by virtue of its enormous heft, to solidify and augment his reputation as none of his small, admirable play books ever did. Its size will cause—indeed, already has caused—it to be viewed by the majority of readers, playgoers and reviewers solemnly, gravely and as of paramount significance. Consider even me. Here, for all the obvious absurdity of giving it the place of importance in this monthly review, when the shorter work of Eugene O'Neill by right deserves initial attention, I too fall for Shaw's perfectly transparent *espièglerie* and begin my article by devoting to it the serious notice that, from any sound critical point of view, it surely does not deserve.

The business of the theatre and its drama is to quicken either the mind or the memory, the heart or the pulse. Drama must do either one or all of these things, or it is not drama. "Back to Methuselah" quickens nothing. It does not stimulate the mind; it does not blow into the air the alluring and graceful smoke rings of rosemary and reminiscence; it does not touch the heart; it does not thrill. And so far as that other great business of the theatre and drama is concerned—the evocation of smiles and laughter—it fails quite as dismally. Essaying to preach the doctrine of creative evolution and the theory that man must lengthen his span of life if he is to accomplish his great work in the world, the Shaw play resolves itself into what is at bottom a mere tortured "stunt," utterly without sound theatrical value, with a philosophical content that is on a par with the metaphysical

profundities of the late Brann the Iconoclast, and with a method of approach and execution so strained, so artistically spurious and withal so improvident in the aligning of materials that—were it not for "Heartbreak House"—one would have some difficulty in resisting the banal sophomoric suspicion that Shaw deliberately permitted himself a dry hiccough and plotted the whole thing as the third in the series of his excellent practical jokes. Surely the humorous Shaw that we have come to know in the long and interesting past could not write such immensely dull and witless stuff save with premeditation he set himself to do so. There is in the manuscript ample internal evidence that supports such an assumption. Some of the humor, notably in the earlier parts of the play, is founded upon jokes so excessively ancient that one can almost *see* Shaw's nose-fingering. The repetitions throughout the play are so frequent, so glaring and so plainly conscious that the author, in thus padding his manuscript to its ungodly length, seems deliberately to be laughing at his audience. Add to these didoes the irrelevance of three-fourths of the second scene of Part I, the irrelevant *sortie* into politics in Part II, and the frequent shameless excursions in Parts III, IV and V—and it becomes clear that Shaw could easily have written a three-hour play out of his materials instead of an eleven-hour one had he been minded to do so. But Shaw is an admirable comedian. He has all the glory and all the money that he needs and wants, and has taken this opportunity to treat himself to a little fun. Almost every humorous writer does so at least once, if he can afford it, as the records from Swift to Mark Twain show.

The production of the Shaw serial by the Theatre Guild was accompanied, as I have hinted, by much of the conventional artistic and critical hypocrisy. If the Shuberts produce a play by any author, good or bad, that happens to run as late as twenty minutes after eleven, the indignation of the newspaper gentlemen knows no bounds. The

Guild, however, aided by Shaw's name, puts on a play in three parts that runs until milk delivery time and in the process bores nearly everyone half to death, and is praised enthusiastically for its "courage," its "uncommercial bravery" and its "artistic independence."

## II

EUGENE O'NEILL's two latest plays, "The First Man" and "The Hairy Ape," not only fail to reach the level of the best of his antecedent dramatic work, but fail as well to achieve the level of his play, "The Fountain," which still awaits production. Yet there is in the second-named manuscript particularly a measure of the imagination, originality, uncompromising integrity and astonishing theatrical vitality that the bulk of his writing reveals. That O'Neill is the most important dramatist the American theatre has thus far produced continues to be impressed upon one as play after play comes from his pen. While certain of these plays—"The First Man" is an example—surely do not represent his skill in its flow and are, truth to tell, second-rate even in liberal estimate, there is none of them that has not a quality that evades his native contemporaries. Those critics who are hostile to O'Neill contend against him that he has no saving humor. The same thing may nine times in ten be said of Hauptmann. I do not, of course, mean to compare O'Neill with the great German; but to urge humor upon a dramatist like O'Neill is akin to urging poetry upon one like George Ade. Again, they contend against O'Neill that he sees the world too insistently as the stage of tragedy. If Shakespeare had died after writing only four of his masterpieces, "Hamlet," "Macbeth," "Romeo" and "Othello," might not the same thing have been idiotically written of him? Such criticism of a dramatist seems to me to be exceedingly silly. If O'Neill had humor it would probably corrupt his strong, passionate, sardonic and elo-

quent pessimism, and he would be writing hybrid pot-boilers like the late Charles Klein. And if he saw the world as less cloudy and more golden with sunshine, he doubtless would be writing "Pegs o' My Heart" instead of "Beyond the Horizons" and "Emperor Joneses" and "Golds."

But even so, O'Neill's critics seem to me to view him faultily on these very points. He has humor. It is not, of course, the humor that reposes in jokes on bootlegging, katzenjammer and spinach. It is not the humor that causes traveling salesmen and stock-brokers to rustle their ribs and ejaculate "Oh, boy!" It is the ironic humor of an observant and reflective man: the grim humor that lies at the bottom of man's eternal tussle with Fate, the conquering clown. This humor shines brilliantly forth from the best of O'Neill's work. And again, though his critics blink it, he has poetry. The general view of O'Neill's plays as a "realistic" string of sailors' oaths, deep gutturals, colloquialisms and expletives is anything but accurate. There is dramatic poetry of an unmistakable subtlety in "Beyond the Horizon," in "The Straw" and, above all, in "The Fountain." In this last-named manuscript there is a degree of lovely line as musical as anything in Stephen Phillips, as clear and simple and sparkling as a lyric by John McClure. O'Neill, taking him by and large, stands out from the run of Americans writing for the stage by virtue of a stollen and aloof independence that steadfastly declines to take into consideration anything but the manuscript before him. Appropriate actors ready and eager to be remuneratively tailored, some fetching and promising designs by a scenic artist, the whole external to-do of the theatre—none of these things interests him. He remembers that, save a writer be a great genius, such things are secondary, and so writes his plays with no thought of them. I know of no other American at the moment who goes at his work with the consistent and resolute honesty of O'Neill. Sometimes, of course, this consistent and resolute

independence produces work that might have been bettered by a bit of clear-visioned and well-reasoned compromise, but more often it produces work that is a fine challenge to the beauty that lies so often buried under the dust of our native stage.

In the case of "The First Man," O'Neill's integrity remains unshaken, but it has not succeeded in creating a good play. I go so far as to say that, of all O'Neill's work, this is by long odds the poorest. With a periodic pulling out of the vox Brieux and vox Wedekind stops, O'Neill has essayed to play a Strindberg dirge on the theme of the child and its parents. What results is a Scandinavian paraphrase of Elizabeth Baker's "Chains," which is defective in vivid character drawing and, it seems to me, in thematic clarity. O'Neill undertakes to show a man's reactions to an unwanted child about to be born to his wife. But the man's reactions, while intelligible separately, are not intelligible when viewed in the aggregate. O'Neill considers the man from several different angles: as one bent solely upon doing his own work in the world, as a sentimentalist where his wife's love is concerned, as a clog in the revolving moral wheel of the small town in which he lives, as a lover of children (the couple has had two who died before the play begins), and as a hater of children. The fitting together of these ill-assorted jigsaw pieces of character O'Neill fails to make either clear or convincing. His play moves its actors, but not its audience. It belongs to that peculiarly muddled side of O'Neill that has recalcitrantly revealed itself in such of his past work as "Where the Cross Is Made" and "The Honor of the Bradleys." The performance of the play in the Neighborhood Playhouse was disastrous. I have seldom laid an eye to such inept staging and murderous acting. O'Neill is making a great mistake in giving over his manuscripts to these incompetent organizations. It was all very well at first, when he was forced up alleys for a hearing, but he is beyond that sort of thing now.

"The Hairy Ape" is a night at the Grand Guignol with a single central character figuring in the succession of eight separate episodes. A study of the Neanderthal type of man thrown into the midst of modern civilization, it presents itself in terms of Max Maurey and Poe, with sudden geyser-like shots of fantastic counterpoint, as an uncommonly effective theatre piece. The attempt to pattern more or less after the method of "The Emperor Jones" is evident: O'Neill here simply changes the motif from blind fear to blind futility. The play is not of the quality of "The Emperor Jones," but it again shows its author in one of his highly interesting exploratory moods. The production by the Provincetown Players was greatly superior to the production of the other play down in Grand Street.

### III

THE MESSRS. George S. Kaufman and Marc Connelly are, precisely speaking, less playwrights than scenewrights. In "Dulcy" and now in "To the Ladies" they display themselves as fresh and witty fellows with a nice gift for creating amusing satirical scenes, but with a considerably lesser gift for creating plays to embroider and surround these scenes. Their scenes, or episodes, stand out from the body of their plays like strawberries from so much whipped cream. It is as if they imagined a rosy sardonic episode or two and then, with considerable labor, whipped up a manuscript in which to imbed them. But even so their comedies—and "To the Ladies" in particular—are very much above the trade-goods of Broadway. Their humor is gracefully free from rubber-stamps; they have a knack of words; they are observant; they are pleasantly impudent. Their moving-picture lampoon in "Dulcy" was genuinely comic stuff; their business man's banquet lampoon in this most recent play is even better. Once these collaborators permit their top scenes to grow naturally out of their plays instead of, as at present, permit-

ting their plays to grow artificially out of the top scenes, they will do work that will be a credit to the American theatre. The current assiduous effort on the part of their friends of the newspapers to have them regarded as a brace of neo-George Ades will do them considerable harm. What with Mr. Rupert Hughes being perspiringly promulgated as "the American Balzac," Mr. John Dos Passos as "the American Zola" and Mr. Donald Ogden Stewart as "the American Swift," the public is beginning to long for a writer whose publisher and cronies will permit the public to estimate him for itself. It hasn't had an opportunity to do so, it would seem, since Harriet Beecher Stowe died. So far as I can make out, the only man writing in America today who is not the American Somebody or Other is Dr. Berthold Baer. The Messrs. Kaufman and Connelly are no more George Ades than I am Goethe. But, despite our friends, let us not despair.

## IV

FOLLOWING the principle of other great men who have named their products in their own honor—men like Frank A. Munsey and "Munsey's Magazine," Van Camp and "Van Camp's Baked Beans," and Bernard L. Thompson and "Thompson's Noiseless Plumbing"—Mr. Earl Carroll has named his new theatre after himself. Although there is no more reason why Mr. Carroll should not have named his theatre after himself than there is why the Messrs. Munsey, Van Camp and Thompson should not have named their distinguished institutions after themselves, it does begin to seem that among the present welter of Cort, Frazee, Nora Bayes, Broadhurst, Eltinge, Jolson, Klaw, Maxine Elliott, Miller and Morosco theatres there should be a bit of room for a theatre or two dedicated to greater figures in the theatre than subsidiary Broadway managers, vaudeville singers, female impersonators and black-face comedians. If gentlemen like

Mr. Carroll, whose sole contribution to the theatre has consisted of a few tin piano cabaret songs, a tawdry Chinese melodrama and a collaborative hand in the kind of play that is called "Daddy Dumplins," believe themselves of sufficient importance to build and dedicate monuments to their own eternal glory, it will perhaps not be long before we shall be regaled with the Leo Newman Theatre, the Louis Cohen Theatre and others of a sort erected by ticket speculators as testimonials to their own eminence, to say nothing of the change of the name of the Booth Theatre to the Sidney Blackmer and of the Garrick to—it may be—the Minnie, in honor of Powers' trained Hippodrome elephant.

Mr. Carroll's percipience in naming the fine theatre after himself instead of after some obscurity like Shakespeare, say, was equalled by his taste in opening it with a play by himself instead of with a manuscript by some lesser dramatist like Rostand or Hauptmann or even Eugene O'Neill. Mr. Carroll's play is called "Bavu." "Bavu" is a Willard Mack play laid in Russia. There is in it much shooting out of lights, smashing of window glass, secret passage hocus-pocus, failure of pistols to go off through the preliminary prudent removal of cartridges, and analogous venerable melo business. I can detect nothing in it that merits extended consideration.

## V

GEORGE M. COHAN's talent as a playwright is founded not upon an observation and understanding of human nature, but upon an observation and understanding of theatrical nature. He is concerned not with man as man, but with man as member of a theatre audience. How man thinks, acts, dreams, loves and hates in the world does not interest him one-tenth so much as how man reacts to an actor thinking, acting, dreaming, loving and hating on the stage. Human nature, Mr. Cohan shrewdly realizes, ceases to be human nature to a considerable extent soon



after handing its ticket to the doorman. The man sitting in an orchestra chair is a somewhat different creature from the man who got out of the taxicab in front of the theatre a few minutes before. He has become, volitionally of course, artificialized to a degree. He has placed himself in what is called the "theatre mood," which is as different from his actual, worldly mood as red is different from green. To attempt, therefore, to treat this man as a rational work-a-day human being is senseless. This, Mr. Cohan appreciates as do few popular American playwrights. Most of these playwrights corrupt their popular plays with attempts at the kind of observation, deduction and philosophy that are part and parcel of a much more exalted form of drama. And the result is plays that are neither successfully popular nor of sound artistic merit. They fall between two stools.

Mr. Cohan, on the contrary, writes his popular plays with but one thing in mind, to wit, that they shall appeal to the artificialized man in the popular-play frame of mind. This does not, as Mr. Cohan's Broadway contemporaries at times appear to believe, necessarily mean a man who is incapable of appreciating a higher form of drama. It may mean simply a man who likes a bit of agreeably light and unimportant entertainment now and then by way of change. The man who sees "Hamlet" on Monday evening and "The Sunken Bell" on Tuesday evening, and who enjoys both immensely, may enjoy "Seven Keys to Baldpate" on Wednesday evening even more than the kind of man who, on the two previous evenings, had gone to a burlesque show and a play by Mr. Jules Eckert Goodman. Unlike so many of his Broadway colleagues, Mr. Cohan has the sagacity neither to write down to the man in the popular-play frame of mind nor to write over what is—when that man has placed himself in this frame of mind—his head. The average man who goes to a popular play wants a popular play, just as the average man who goes to a brewery goes there for a glass of beer. The man,

whoever or whatever he is, who goes to "Turn to the Right" or "The Bat" wants that kind of play; he doesn't want either a play that tries to be popular and can't—like "Desert Sands," say, on the one hand—or a play that tries to be unpopular and succeeds—like "Difference in Gods," say, on the other.

Mr. Cohan gives such a man exactly what he wants, or at least makes it his business to try to give him exactly what he wants. He does not, like his colleagues, show off with attempts at sharp character drawing, with moral purpose, with sense, with flights of fancy, with philosophies of life or with any other such pieces of excess baggage. He has studied the human being in the audience long enough to know that that human being, once he is in the theatre, is less a human being than an actor, so to speak, in street clothes: a harmless and somewhat idiotic creature with his eye winking and his mind in his necktie, interested not nearly so much in dramatic accuracy and vraisemblance as in pleasant nonsense. Nine men in ten look on the theatre as a "party"; the tenth goes to the Neighborhood Playhouse. Mr. Cohan is essentially a "party" playwright. He gets, figuratively, a bit tipsy, trips up the butler, pours the bowl of goldfish into the piano, slaps the hostess on the back, whistles the Greek national anthem, takes a running slide across the ballroom floor, knocks over half a dozen palms, and lands on the bass drum with the drummer on top of him. This is a picture of the average George Cohan play. It is a picture, and a more or less accurate one, of his latest, "Madeleine and the Movies," a humorous crazy-quilt manufactured after his familiar trick pattern. The dramatization of a moving-picture scenario in terms of delirium tremens, it provides an illuminating example of popular playmaking reduced to its elementals and held up to the light. If it does not on this occasion achieve the popularity that its author has striven for, it will simply be because it has achieved it too often in the past.

## VI

OF the remaining plays that I have laid an eye to, the only one that discloses any degree of merit is A. A. Milne's "The Truth About Blayds." Milne here abandons his lighter mood for an excursion into ironic comedy and with results that, if not uniformly successful from a dramatic point of view, are nevertheless often agreeably pointed and biting. The theme is an old one—the structure of respect and fame erected upon deceit—but the playwright has tricked it out with a number of felicitous devices and observations that give it some life. As in all of Milne's work, the play wears thinner and thinner as it goes along, the puffing and pulling becoming all too obvious before the second act is half done. Mr. Winthrop Ames has staged the manuscript with excellent taste, although he causes the off-stage sun to cut very fancy capers in order to register certain of his pretty lighting effects.

In "The First Fifty Years," by Henry Myers, I can see little. The notion of showing the milestones in the life of a husband and wife, with the froth of love flattening into the commonplace and with the commonplace in turn giving birth to disillusion and with disillusion generating acrimony and settled despair, is an available one. But the present author has succeeded in doing nothing with it that is not dramatically conventional. Sharp observation, philosophy and humor are lacking.

"Up the Ladder" is simply another Owen Davis play, utterly devoid of worth. And while "Broken Branches," by the Messrs. Nyitray and Winslow, was not written by Mr. Davis, it might well have been.

## VII

THE most amusing of the tune shows produced in the last six weeks is "For Goodness Sake." What is essentially a feeble exhibit is converted into good pastime by two of its features: the first

being Miss Adele Astaire, the most attractive and diverting dancing girl revealed by the stage this season, and the second being fifteen minutes of exceptionally funny low comedy by Mr. Charles Judels in the second act. I have laughed heartily in the theatre many, many times. I have laughed like an hyena at George Bickel's brass band in "On the Yukon," which was later incorporated into one of the early "Follies" shows. I have laughed like a shoe-drummer at the paint-smearing act in a Winter Garden show of eight or nine years ago. I have laughed till my ribs ached at Robert B. Mantell's King Lear. But I doubt that I have ever laughed harder than over this Mons. Judels' description of his brother's great virtuosity as a maker of omelettes. I suppose that this is a confession that will bar me for all time from the Drama League and that the Little Theatre in Union Mills, North Carolina, will now withdraw its invitation to me to lecture, but I set down the low fact and compose myself for the worst.

The best feature of "The Rose of Stamboul" is a Leo Fall score that contains two or three fetching compositions. The mounting of the show is colorful; James Barton's feet are good comedians; and Miss Tessa Kosta's voice is superior to that of most music show cacklers. But the ladies of the ensemble are lacking in those virtues of face and figure upon which Mr. Joseph Hergesheimer discourses with such persuasive eloquence and assiduity.

The weakest feature of "The Hotel Mouse" is the way that Miss Frances White does her hair. Why the Mlle. White should soak her hair in oil and slap it back tightly over her cranium after the fashion of a school-teacher in a girls' reformatory is something that has long baffled my customarily acute critical talents. I shall meditate upon the subject for a few months longer and, failing then to arrive at a conclusion, shall pass the problem on to Dr. Brander Matthews.

# Reflections on Prose Fiction

By H. L. Mencken

## I

### *The Novel*

A SUBTLE flavor of effeminacy hangs about the novel, however melodramatic its content. It is an art-form which, like water-color painting, often suggests pinkness and *poudre de riz*. And why shouldn't it? When it arose in Spain (in the form that we know today) after the middle of the sixteenth century, it was aimed very frankly at the emerging women of the Castilian seraglios—women who were gradually emancipating themselves from the *Küche-Kinder-Kirche* darkness of the later Middle Ages, but had not yet come to anything even remotely approaching the worldly experience and intellectual curiosity of men. They had begun to master the art of reading from print and wanted to practise it, but the grand literature of the time was beyond their comprehension and interest, as it often is even today. So literary confectioners undertook to manufacture lighter stuff for them, and the modern novel was born. A single plot served many of those confectioners; it became a sort of convention of the form. In essence, it depicted a pair of lovers as coming together ecstatically and then being torn apart by a harsh fate for long years. The final consummation of their love was never reached until the last chapter; they yearned and yearned, but the honeymoon was always postponed. This plot still serves a full half of our practising novelists, and Arnold Bennett is authority for the doctrine that it is the safest that is known. Its appeal is obviously to feminine tastes and prejudices, not to masculine.

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Women like to be wooed endlessly before they put on the *Scheitel* and are wooed no more. But a man, when he finds a damsel to his fancy, is eager to get through the preliminary hocus-pocus as soon as possible.

That women are still the chief readers of novels is known to every book clerk. What is less often noted is that women themselves, as they have gradually become literate, have forced their way to the front as novelists, and that they show signs of ousting men, soon or late, from the form. Save in the department of lyrical verse, they have nowhere else done serious work in literature. There is no epic poem of any solid value by a woman, and no drama, whether comedy or tragedy, and no work of metaphysical speculation, and no basic document in any other realm of human thought. In criticism, whether of works of art or of the ideas underlying them, few women have ever got beyond the *Schwärmerei* of Madame de Staël's "L'Allemagne." But in the novel they have stood on a level with even the most competent men since the day of Jane Austen. Today it would be difficult to think of a contemporary German novelist of sounder dignity than Clara Viebig, Helene Böhlau or Ricarda Huch, or a Swedish novelist clearly above Selma Lagerlöf, or an Italian above Mathilda Serao, or, for that matter, more than two or three living Englishmen above May Sinclair, or more than the same number of Americans above Willa Cather. Not only are women writing novels quite as good as those written by men—setting aside the work of a few miraculous geniuses, *e. g.*, Joseph Conrad—; they are actually surpassing men

in their experimental development of the novel form. I do not believe that either Evelyn Scott's "The Narrow House" or Zona Gale's "Miss Lulu Bett" has the depth and beam of, say, Dreiser's "Jennie Gerhardt" or Frank Norris' "Vandover and the Brute," but it must be obvious that both books show a far greater venturesomeness—that both seek to free the novel from artificialities that Dreiser and Norris were content to submit to. When men show any discontent with those artificialities, it usually takes the form of a revolt against the whole inner spirit of the novel—that is, against the characteristics which make it what it is. Their larger imagination tempts them to try to convert it into something that it isn't, *e. g.*, a poem or a philosophical work. This fact explains, in one direction, such quasi-dialectical parables as Dreiser's "The 'Genius,'" H. G. Wells' "Joan and Peter" and Norris' "The Octopus," and, in a quite different direction, such rhapsodical pieces as Cabell's "Jurgen." But the women novelists, with very few exceptions, are careful to remain within the proper bounds of the novel. Miss Cather's "My Antonia" shows a great deal of originality in its method; the story it tells is certainly not told in a conventional manner. But it remains a pure novel none the less, and is as clearly so, in fact, as "Robinson Crusoe."

Much exertion of the laryngeal and respiratory muscles is wasted upon a discussion of the differences between realistic novels and romantic novels. As a matter of fact, every actual novel is realistic in its method, however fantastic it may be in its fable. The primary aim of the novel, at all times and everywhere, is representation, and no other art form clings to that aim so faithfully. It sets forth, not what might be true about human beings or what ought to be true, but what actually *is* true. This is obviously not the case with poetry. Poetry is the product of an effort to invent a world appreciably better than the one we live in; its essence is not the representation of the

facts, but the concealment and denial of the facts. As for the drama, it vacillates, and if it touches the novel on one side it also touches the epic on the other. But the novel is concerned solely with human nature as it is practically revealed, and with human experience as men actually know it. If it departs from that representational purpose ever so slightly, it becomes to that extent a bad novel; if it departs violently it ceases to be a novel at all. Cabell, who shows all the critical deficiencies of a sound artist, is one who has spent a good deal of time reviling realism. Yet it is a plain fact that his own stature as an artist depends almost wholly upon his capacity for accurate observation and realistic representation. The stories in "The Line of Love," though they may appear superficially to be excessively romantic, really owe all of their charm to their pungent realism. The pleasure they give is the pleasure of recognition; one somehow delights in seeing a medieval baron acting precisely like a New York stockbroker. As for "Jurgen," it is as realistic in manner as Zola's "La Terre," despite its grotesque fable and its burden of political, theological and epistemological prejudices. No one not an idiot would mistake the dialogue between Jurgen and Queen Guinevere's father for romantic, in the sense that Kipling's "Mandalay" is romantic; it is actually as mordantly realistic as the dialogue between Nora and Helmer in the last act of "A Doll's House."

It is my contention that women succeed in the novel—and that they will succeed even more strikingly as they gradually throw off the inhibitions that have hitherto cobwebbed their minds—simply because they are better fitted for this realistic representation than men—because they see the facts of life more sharply, and are less distracted by moony dreams. Women seldom have the pathological faculty vaguely called imagination. One doesn't often hear of them groaning over colossal bones in their sleep, as dogs do, or constructing heavenly hierarchies or political utopias, as men do. Their concern is always

with things of more objective substance—roofs, meals, rent, clothes, the birth and upbringing of children. They are, I believe, generally happier than men, if only because the demands they make of life are more moderate and less romantic. The chief pain that a man normally suffers in his progress through this vale is that of disillusionment; the chief pain that a woman suffers is that of parturition. There is enormous significance in the difference. The first is artificial and self-inflicted; the second is natural and unescapable. The psychological history of the differentiation I need not go into here: its springs lie obviously in the greater physical strength of man and his freedom from child-bearing, and in the larger mobility and capacity for adventure that go therewith. A man dreams of utopias simply because he feels himself free to construct them; a woman must keep house. In late years, to be sure, she has toyed with the idea of escaping that necessity, but I shall not bore you with arguments showing that she never will. So long as children are brought into the world and made ready for the trenches, the sweatshops and the gallows by the laborious method ordained of God she will never be quite as free to roam and dream as man is. It is only a small minority of her sex who cherish a contrary expectation, and this minority, though anatomically female, is spiritually male. Show me a woman who has visions comparable, say, to those of Swedenborg, Woodrow Wilson, Strindberg or Dr. Ghandi, and I'll show you a woman who is a very powerful anaphrodisiac.

Thus women, by their enforced preoccupation with the harsh facts of life, are extremely well fitted to write novels, which must deal with the facts or nothing. What they need for the practical business, in addition, falls under two heads. First, they need enough sense of independence to make them free to set down what they see. Secondly, they need the modest technical skill, the formal mastery of words and ideas, necessary to do it. The latter, I believe, they

have had ever since they learned to read and write, say three hundred years ago; it comes to them far more readily than to men, and is exercised with greater ease. The former they are fast acquiring. In the days of Aphra Behn and Ann Radcliffe it was almost as scandalous for a woman to put her observations and notions into print as it was for her to show her legs; even in the days of Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë the thing was regarded as decidedly unladylike. But now, within certain limits, she is free to print whatever she pleases, and before long even those surviving limits will be obliterated. If I live to the year 1950 I expect to see a novel by a woman that will describe a typical marriage under Christianity, from the woman's standpoint, as realistically as it is treated from the man's standpoint in Upton Sinclair's "Love's Pilgrimage." That novel, I venture to predict, will be a cuckoo. At one stroke it will demolish superstitions that have prevailed in the Western World since the fall of the Roman Empire. It will seem harsh, but it will be true. And, being true, it will be a good novel. There can be no good one that is not true.

What ailed the women novelists, until very recently, was a lingering ladyism—a childish prudery inherited from their mothers. I believe that it is being rapidly thrown off; indeed, one often sees a concrete woman novelist shedding it. I give you two obvious examples: Zona Gale and Willa Cather. Miss Gale started out by trying to put into novels the conventional prettiness that is esteemed along the Main Streets of her native Wisconsin. She had skill and did it well, and so she won a good deal of popular success. But her work was intrinsically as worthless as a treatise on international politics by the Hon. Warren Gamaliel Harding or a tract on the duties of a soldier and a gentleman by a state president of the American Legion. Then, of a sudden, for some reason quite unknown to the deponent, she threw off all that flabby artificiality and began describing the people about



her as they really were. The result was a second success even more pronounced than her first, and on a palpably higher level. The career of Miss Cather has covered less ground, for she began far above Main Street. What she tried to do at the start was to imitate the superficial sophistication of Edith Wharton and Henry James—a deceptive thing, apparently realistic in essence, but actually as conventional as table manners or the professional buffooneries of a Fifth Avenue rector. Miss Cather had extraordinary skill as a writer, and so her imitation was scarcely to be distinguished from the original, but in the course of time she began to be aware of its hollowness. Then she turned to first-hand representation—to pictures of the people she actually knew. There ensued a series of novels that rose step by step to the very distinguished quality of "My Antonia." That fine novel is a great deal more than simply a fine novel. It is a document in the history of American literature. It proves, once and for all time, that representation is not, as Cabell sometimes seems to think, inimical to beauty. It proves, on the contrary, that the most careful and penetrating representation is itself the source of a rare and wonderful beauty. No romantic novel ever written in America, by man or woman, is one-half so beautiful as "My Antonia."

As I have said, the novel, here as elsewhere, still radiates an aroma of effeminacy, in the old sense. Specifically, it deals too monotonously with the varieties of human transactions which chiefly interest the unintelligent women who are its chief patrons and the scarcely less intelligent women who, until recently, were among its chief commercial manufacturers, to wit, the transactions that revolve around the ensnarement of men by women—the puerile tricks and conflicts of what is absurdly called romantic love. But I believe that the women novelists, as they emerge into the fulness of skill, will throw overboard all that old baggage and leave its toting to such male artisans as Chambers, Rex Beach, Con-

ingsby Dawson and Emerson Hough, as they have already left the whole flag-waving and "red-blooded" buncombe. True enough, the snaring of men will remain the principal business of women in this world for many generations; but it would be absurd to say that intelligent women, even today, view it romantically—that is, as it is viewed by bad novelists. They see it realistically, and they see it, not as an end in itself, but as a means to other ends. It is, speaking generally, after she has got her man that a woman begins to live. The novel of the future, I believe, will show her thus living. It will depict the intricate complex of forces that conditions her life and generates her ideas, and it will show, against a background of actuality, her conduct in the eternal struggle between her aspiration and her destiny. Women, as I have said, are not normally harassed by the grandiose and otiose visions that inflame the gizzards of men, but they, too, discover inevitably that life is a conflict, and that it is the harsh fate of *Homo sapiens* to get the worst of it. I should like to read a "Main Street" by an articulate Carol Kennicott, or a "Titan" by one of Cowerwood's mistresses, or a "Cytherea" by a Fanny Randon—or a Savina Grove! It would be sweet stuff, indeed. . . . And it will come.

The men, I repeat, are too often run amuck by their gaudy dreams and *Katzenjammer* to keep within the bounds of the novel, properly so called. Those bounds, of course, do not run where simple representation ceases. The novel, like every other work of art, is necessarily a criticism of life as well as a picture of it; it is impossible to make even a photograph without saying something about the sitter—if no more, simply that he has too large a nose, or eyes as dull as oysters. But the male novelist is not ordinarily content with that fundamental giving away, nor even with the irony that accentuates it and lends it the illusion of combat. Too often he is seduced by his oafish credulities and enthusiasms into loading his chronicle with indignation and argument, to the grave

damage of his criticism. Compare Thackeray and Jane Austen—the one forever yielding to moral, social and even political idas; the other content to let her story tell itself. The eternal male weakness for *a priori* theories and utopian visions—the masculine perunamania—has crippled novelist after novelist. In our own time I point to Wells and Dreiser, both brought into absurdity and dullness by the lust to prophesy. And to Romain Rolland, and Hermann Sudermann, and D. H. Lawrence, and Winston Churchill, and Hugh Walpole, and Pío Baroja, and Johan Bojer. Sherwood Anderson has been damaged by that yearning; it keeps his novels far below “Winesburg, Ohio,” which is simple representation. Floyd Dell has been lately ruined by it: observe the sharp descent from “Moon-Calf” to “The Briary Bush.” To jump a league, even Anatole France, the professional skeptic, has had his moments of male infirmity as novelist, just as he had his moment of infirmity as patriot. . . . It is my contention that women, as a class, and particularly women on the higher levels, show a greater disvulnerability to that green-sickness than men—that their skepticism, once it becomes full-blown, is better able than the skepticism of men to withstand the lascivious winds of doctrine. And so contending, I venture to predict that, as more and more of them acquire the necessary technical and experiential equipment, they will take to themselves a larger and larger share in the making of the better sort of novels.

## II

*Scherzo for the Bassoon*

ALDOUS HUXLEY'S “Chrome Yellow” (*Doran*), if it be called a novel, violates all of the rules and regulations that I have just laid down so smugly. But why call it a novel? I can see absolutely no reason for doing so, save that the publisher falls into the error in his slip-cover, press-matter and canned review. As a matter of fact, the book is simply an elaborate piece of spoofing, without

form and without direction. It begins, goes on aimlessly, and then suddenly stops. But are only novels fit to read? Nay; try “Chrome Yellow.” If it does not make you yell with joy, then I throw off the prophetic robes forever. It is a piece of buffoonery that sweeps the whole range from the most delicate and suggestive tickling to the most violent thumping of the ribs. It has made me laugh as I have not laughed since I read the Inaugural Harangue of Dr. Harding.

This Huxley, in truth, is a fellow of the utmost shrewdness, ingenuity, sophistication, impudence, waggishness and contumacy—a literary atheist who is forever driving herds of sheep, hogs, camels, calves and jackasses into the most sacred temples of his people. He represents the extreme swing of the reaction against everything that a respectable Englishman holds to be true and holy. The attitude is no pose, as it would be among the fugitives from the cow states in Greenwich Village; it comes to him legitimately from his grandfather, Thomas Henry Huxley, perhaps the roughest and most devastating manhandler of gods ever heard of in human history. Old Thomas Henry was a master of cultural havoc and rapine simply because he never grew indignant. In the midst of his most fearful crimes against divine revelation he maintained the aloof and courtly air of an executioner cutting off the head of a beautiful queen. Did he disembowel the Pentateuch, to the scandal of Christendom? Then it was surely done politely—even with a certain easy geniality. Did he knock poor old Gladstone all over the lot, first standing him on his head and then bouncing him upon his gluteus maximus? Then the business somehow got the graceful character of a *Wienerwalz*. Aldous is obviously less learned than his eminent grandpa. I doubt that he is privy to the morphology of *Astacus fluviatilis* or that he knows anything more about the Pleistocene or the Middle Devonian than is common gossip among Oxford barmaids. But though he thus shows a falling off in

positive knowledge, he is far ahead of the *Ur*-Huxley in worldly wisdom, and it is this worldly wisdom which produces the charm of "Chrome Yellow." Here, in brief, is a civilized man's *reductio ad absurdum* of his age—his contemptuous kicking of its pantaloons. Here, in a short space, delicately, ingratiatingly and irresistibly, whole categories and archipelagoes of contemporary imbecilities are brought to the trial by wit. In some dull review or other I have encountered the news that all the characters of the fable are real people and that the author himself is Denis, the minor poet, who loses his girl by being too cerebral and analytical to grab her. Nonsense! Huxley, if he is there at all, is Scogan, the chorus to the whole drama, with his astounding common sense, his acidulous humor, and his incomparable heresies.

### III

#### *Philological*

Two excellent volumes upon the nature of language have recently come to hand: "Language: Its Nature, Development and Origin," by Prof. Dr. Otto Jespersen, of the University of Copenhagen (*Allen*), and "Language: An Introduction to the Study of Speech," by Edward Sapir (*Harcourt*). A dull subject, quotha? Shoved down into the mire of eternal imbecility by the furious hoofing of grammarians? Then read these books, and you will discover that even philology, when it is discussed by men who really understand it, has all the fascination of scandal. On the whole, it seems to me that Dr. Jespersen's work is at once the more comprehensive and the more interesting, though it runs to nearly 500 large pages of small type and the author is writing throughout in a language not his own. But though Dr. Jespersen thus does most of his fundamental thinking, I suppose, in his native Danish, his knowledge of English is so enormous that no sense of his foreignness ever gets into his pages. He is, indeed, unquestionably the foremost English scholar living in the world today—a

fact not without its curious humors. Here in the United States there is no one to put beside him, and even in England there are few who deserve to be mentioned in the same breath with him. Why the native tongue of Americans and Englishmen is so grossly neglected by our pundits is one of the mysteries of scholarship. For long years its scientific study was almost monopolized by the Germans. In England there are now a number of professors of the language who approach it intelligently, and some of them, *e. g.*, Bradley, Wyld and Jones, have begun to write useful books about it. But in the United States, once you have mentioned Dr. Pound and Dr. Krapp, you have almost exhausted the list of those who have contributed anything to the study of it as a living speech. The rest are archeologists, pedagogues, philological theologians. Even Mr. Sapir, whose book I have just bracketed with Dr. Jespersen's, is not an Americano, but a Canadian, and from internal evidence I guess that he has had German training. More, he is not a professor of language at all, but an official of the Canadian Government.

As I have said, it seems to me, as a philological amateur, that Dr. Jespersen's work is of more interest and value than Mr. Sapir's, if only because he exhibits a braver grappling with fundamental problems. How did speech originate? What is the process whereby a language is acquired? What causes the vast changes that philologists note? How are we to account for the elaborate machinery of inflection—a machinery often so complex, even in the speech of primitive peoples, that it almost rivals the apparatus of algebra or counterpoint? Here Dr. Jespersen is brave, and, what is more, extremely ingenious and persuasive. Out of his gigantic knowledge, not only of the few languages that are his specialties, but also of the larger principles of comparative philology, he attempts answers that, in the absence of direct evidence, must needs seem reasonable and convincing. His book, indeed, is a veritable mine of philological learning. He not only pre-

sents his own conclusions on all capital points; he also presents a digest of the conclusions of all other competent men, from the days of Herder to the present time, including even such unfamiliar ones as those of the forgotten American, Horatio Hale, as to the method whereby new languages originate. His inquiry gets far beyond mere philology. He is acutely aware of the social and psychological factors which enter into every phenomenon of language, and he discusses their interplay with the utmost sagacity. Altogether, his book is a genuinely first-rate piece of work. There was a definite need for it. There is nothing in English to be compared to it.

But if Mr. Sapir's shorter study is less profound, and (this is rather curious) less clearly and persuasively written, it at least deserves high praise for one superb chapter: that on grammatical concepts. The exposition here, despite the fact that it begins with a labeling and pigeon-holing almost worthy of a Ph.D., is beautifully clear, and the ideas set forth are incisive and important. The chief of them is perhaps the most difficult that a student of a foreign tongue has to grapple with—the idea, to wit, that our classification of words and phrases by tense, number, gender and so on is not fundamental and inevitable—that in most other languages these concepts have significances that differ from their significances in English, and that in some languages they are absent altogether. Even in English, as Mr. Sapir shows, their relative importance tends to change. We have begun to attach a purely positional power to certain of our pronouns, and as it comes in some of their old powers go out. This movement is most evident in the popular American dialect of English—a dialect which, in its sensitiveness

to philological change, has gone far ahead of standard English. Other changes of equal importance also appear in it, and some of them are discussed by Mr. Sapir. His book is original and valuable.

#### Briefer Mention

A SURVEY, by Max Beerbohm (*Doubleday*)

—A new collection of cartoons and caricatures by a favorite performer. Most of them are excellent, and there is a capital preface by the artist.

TRIUMPHANT PLUTOCRACY, by R. F. Pettigrew (*Academy Press*)—A terrific indictment of the whole obscene farce of democratic government, particularly as it is manifested at Washington. The author is a former Senator from South Dakota.

TOWARD THE GREAT PEACE, by Ralph Adams Cram (*Jones*)—Another eloquent plea for a revival of medievalism by the author of "The Nemesis of Mediocrity" and "Walled Towns."

MY TRIP ABROAD, by Charlie Chaplin (*Harper*)—The simple tale of an astounding pilgrimage.

DODO, by E. F. Benson (*Doran*)—A new edition (but apparently from the old plates) of this refined shocker of 30 years ago, with a preface by the author.

MEMOIRS OF A MIDGET, by Walter de la Mare (*Knopf*)—I regret to have to report that I can't read it.

THE WAYS OF LAUGHTER, by Harold Begbie (*Putnam*)—A sentimental piece by the English Gene Stratton Porter.

MARIA CHAPDELAINE, by Louis Hémon, translated by W. H. Blake (*Macmillan*)—An idyllic story of considerable merit, though by no means the masterpiece described in the blurbs.

GOLD-KILLER, by John Prosper (*Doran*)—A dime novel for \$1.75.

WHERE THE PAVEMENT ENDS, by John Russell (*Knopf*)—A book of exotic tales in the Kipling manner. The history of the volume is more interesting than the contents. The work of an American, it was published here in 1919 as "The Red Mark" and promptly fell dead. Last year it was reprinted in England, somehow seized the public fancy, and now, on the strength of its English success, is republished here, and selling very well.





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